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The Life and Martyrdom

OF

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SAVONAROLA.

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE

History of Church and State Connexion

BY

R. R. MADDEN, M.R.I.A.,

AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN TURKEY, SYRIA AND PALESTINE," "THE MUSSULMAN," "THE SHRINES AND SEPULCHRES," &c. &c.

"Igne me examinasti et non est inventa in me iniquitas."—*Psalm* vi.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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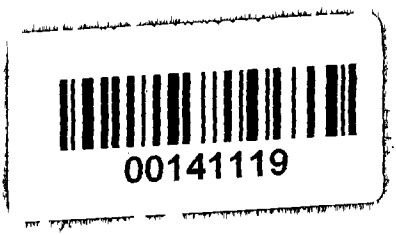

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

This Work,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE CHARACTER AND CAREER OF

THE GREAT CHRISTIAN HERO OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY,

AND OF A SUBJECT

WHICH HAS ENGAGED THE ATTENTION OF THINKING MEN

IN AGES LONG PAST, AS WELL AS

IN RECENT TIMES,

"THE STATE, IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE CHURCH,"

Is respectfully dedicated,

BY THE AUTHOR.

London, May 2, 1853.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE was a monk in Florence, at the close of the fifteenth century, who was of opinion that the mortal enemy of Christ's Gospel, in all ages of the world, had been mammon; that simony was the sin against the Holy Ghost; that the interests of religion were naturally allied with those of liberty; and that the Arts were the handmaids of both, of a Divine origin, and were given to earth for purposes that tended to spiritualise humanity.

Men of all creeds, who believe in Christianity, have an interest in the life and labours of this monk—Girolamo Savonarola, of Ferrara—the great Dominican Missionary, and champion of Christ's truth of the fifteenth century; who, in a dark and degenerate age, proclaimed the necessity of allying the interests of religion with those of civil liberty and civilisation, and who directed all his teachings, preachings, and writings to one grand object, for the accomplishment of which it seemed as if it were his destiny to "live, move, and have a being," namely, *the separation of religion from all worldly influences.*

It was attempted in the days of Savonarola, and has been

tried in our own, to give this illustrious Dominican the character of a mere demagogue, an enthusiast, and a visionary. Literary men of great eminence have represented him as a fanatic and a firebrand; a pulpit agitator, who perverted the Gospel of peace and charity, to the ends of faction, strife, and selfishness. Such representations have been made by writers who had scarcely any knowledge of the works of Savonarola, except at the hands of his cotemporaries, who were friends, favourites, or admirers of the Medici, as patrons of learning, a class of men who were the enemies of Savonarola. Some philosophical writers, who were cotemporaries of this monk, speak of him disparagingly; writers who almost worshipped the Medici for substituting Platonism for Christianity, having no sympathies with spiritual men, who derived their inspirations from a Gospel preached by lowly, illiterate men, who sympathised with the poor and the oppressed in their times, and who denounced hypocrisy, cupidity, and impiety, in high places. How could the literary courtiers, the men of letters, who were the protegées of princes, spiritual and temporal, appreciate the labours, for the renovation of religion, of a simple ecclesiastic, without preferment, rank, station, wealth, or influence, or tolerate his boldness, in dealing with the vices of the rich and powerful — rebuking cardinal princes and sovereign pontiffs, calling on them to put a stop to the relaxation of Church discipline, and to stem the torrent of ecclesiastical disorder, that was sweeping away all reverence for religion, its ministers, and its truth?

The Life of Savonarola can be written only by one who thinks the interests of truth and justice must not be sacri-

ficed for the purpose of upholding any polemical opinions, or the character of any power that has dominion over them.

It is not with a view of gaining a martyr for Protestantism, a saint for one of the religious orders—making an adversary for one Church, or an advocate for another—that the life must be written of the great reforming Friar of Ferrara, who waged war—fatal, indeed, to himself—with the abuses of the Court of Rome and the Government of Alexander the Sixth, upwards of three centuries and a half ago.

On the subject of Church and State connexion and its results, some original documents will be found in these volumes, of the highest interest. The materials for a true and faithful account of Savonarola, must be sought, chiefly, in his own numerous compositions, sermons, homilies, moral treatises, revelations, and commentaries on the sacred writings. Savonarola, in effect, must be made to speak, from his own works, for his sincerity as a Christian; his devotedness to the cause of truth and of humanity, as a Reformer; his fidelity to his vows of poverty, obedience, and charity, as a member of a religious order. The possession of the greater part of his remarkable performances, now of great rarity (as the learned are well aware), enables the Author to carry this design into execution—namely, to make Savonarola the exponent of his own opinions, purposes, and methods of aiming at their accomplishment; the recorder of his own revelations, the reporter of his own labours, in the pulpit and in the cloister, for the restoration of religion and the salvation of souls.

For the sake of truth and justice, which conduce more

than all things in this world to the honour and glory of God and to the good of true religion, this Life of Savonarola has been undertaken—with a strong conviction on the mind of the Author, that to do justice to it would be to render a service to religion and to humanity at large.

A man who loves truth more than he does sect, has a difficult task to execute, who seeks to put Savonarola before the world as a soldier of the Cross, faithful to his cause, and a martyr for it. Protestants claim him for their creed, as the precursor of Luther. Luther himself claimed him for it; so did Flaccius, Beza, Heidegger, Arnold, Fabricius, and, in later times, Milner, Herant, and Hafe. Very many Catholics, on the other hand, such as the prelate Ambrosio Catharino Polito, Burchard, Apostolo Zeno, Delrio, Feller, Rochrbacher, Brownson, and many more, readily admit that claim, or, at all events, reject Savonarola, as a heretic or schismatic, and deny him a place within the pale of Catholicity.

Then we have other Catholic divines and great doctors of the Church, several eminent Dominican fathers—Bzovius, Natalis Alexander, Raynaldus, Burlamacchi, Benevieni, Quetif, and others, extolling his sanctity, and claiming for him the honour due to an illustrious confessor of the faith, and a martyr.

Bayle is content to make it impossible for any church to claim him with advantage or credit; and, to crown our bewilderment, we have the trumpets of history giving most uncertain sounds in regard to his merits, and, like the people of Jericho, we are exceedingly confounded by the variable blasts of those instruments of literary controversy.

Nerli, Buddæus, Paulus Jovius, Nardi, Machiavelli, and Schræckh, *cum multis aliis*, leave us in doubt whether most to admire the piety and learning of the Friar, or to marvel at his fanaticism or imposture.

The majority of mankind require to be thought for, it is imagined by polemical writers in general; and many historical ones hold the same opinion, but do not profess it.

I have written this work with a different conviction, and in the manner that seemed to me most calculated to enable my readers to form their opinions on the subject of it justly and correctly.

With this view, I have abstained from consulting any persons, either of the clergy or laity of any creed, or of the religious order of the subject of this biography, on any topic connected with my undertaking. I have no doubt I might have derived much useful assistance from many of the Dominican order, had I sought it; but acting as I did on the opinion I have just now expressed in regard to my readers, and resolving to think for myself, I abstained from soliciting or accepting any aid, advice, or co-operation from them, except in regard to the inedited correspondence of Fra Girolamo, recently brought to light by the learned Padre Marchese.

Whatever may be the merits or demerits of any opinion advanced, or information given in my work, to me alone do they belong. My desire in undertaking this work has been to do justice to the memory of a man whom I regard as the great Christian hero of the fifteenth century; and to make the calamitous results, to religion and its ministers, of connexion between Church and State,

manifest to the world as the sun at noon-day. If that object be one that deserves success in the opinion of the public, I may venture to hope that my work will then have some claim to their favour. But, if I am mistaken in respect to that object, then have I imposed on myself a vast amount of labour and research in vain.

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NOTICE

OF

PORTRAITS OF SAVONAROLA.

The most eminent artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have left portraits and other representations of Savonarola. Rafael has introduced his portrait into his picture of the Doctors of the Church, in the very *loggie* of the Vatican, from which the anathemas against the Friar had been not long previously fulminated.

An artist of great celebrity, of the order of Fra Girolamo, has left two portraits of the renowned prior of San Marco.

Fra Bartolomeo Di San Marco, known in the world as Baccio Della Porta, was born in 1469, and died in 1517. He figures in the Lives of the Eminent Artists by Georgio Vasari, as a most excellent painter, of exquisite delicacy of touch, admirable design, and great mastery of his art. While a secular man, living in Florence, greatly esteemed for his talents and his worth, we are told by Vasari he attended the preachings, with infinite devotion, of "that renowned theologian Fra Girolamo Savonarola."

The illustrious painter's respect for the person of Fra Girolamo, and his constant visits to San Marco, led to an intimate friendship, and, shortly after the death of the martyred friar, to the assumption of the habit of San Domenico, in the year 1500, in the Dominican convent of Prato, ten miles from Florence. It would appear from the way in which Vasari mentions the portrait by him of Savonarola, to which he refers, that it was painted during the life-time of Savonarola, in the early part of 1498, certainly previous to the 23rd of May of that year. Speaking of the Auto da fé of vanities, in 1498, Vasari says, "Not long after this, Baccio della Porta (Bartolomeo), moved by the love

which he bore to Fra Girolamo, painted a picture, *wherein was* his portrait, which is indeed most beautiful. This work at the time was transported to Ferrara, but was brought back to Florence not a great while since, and is now in the home of Filippo, the son of Alamanni Salviati, by whom, as being a work of Baccio's, it is held in the highest estimation."

The editor of Bohn's edition of Vasari's work observes: "There is a fine portrait of Savonarola, by Fra Bartolomeo, now in the Academy of the Fine Arts in Florence. It has a deep wound in the head, doubtless in allusion to his martyrdom, and is therefore not likely to be that here alluded to, although some annotators appear to consider that it may be the one mentioned by Vasari, as in the possession of Filippo Salviati."*

The annotators are certainly mistaken in the opinion.

In a very rare illustrated work, in Italian and English, entitled "Vita di Fra Bartolomeo," published in Florence, in folio, by an English artist, Thomas Patch, in 1772, in which copies of all the principal works of Fra Bartolomeo are to be found, there is a fine copy of "*the portrait* of Savonarola," by Fra Bartolomeo.

No such wound as is represented in the head of the picture in the Academy of the Fine Arts, is to be found in this portrait.

The portrait painted by Fra Bartolomeo, which Marchese styles Lo Stupende Ritratto, is now in Florence, he states, in the possession of Ermolao Rubieri.* Another, by the same artist, he adds, formerly in San Marco, is now in the gallery of the Florentine Academy. Several medallions exist in bronze. There is a full-length portrait of Savonarola, in a group of figures in fresco, at a villa at Poggio Cajano, by Pocetti.

In the biography of Savonarola by Mons. Caule, there is a half-length portrait of Fra Girolamo, taken, with some slight alteration in the position of the hands, from an original picture, said to have existed in the cell of Fra Girolamo, in San Marco, ascribed (perhaps erroneously) to a cotemporary artist.

There are two portraits in oil, of Savonarola, in the possession of Mr. D. Macarthy (residing in Bath), a gentleman intimately acquainted with Italian art and literature. "One," says Mr. Macarthy, "is an

* Vasari's Lives of the most Eminent Painters, &c., Bohn's Eng. Ed. in 3 vols. 1841, vol. ii. p. 449.

† Lettere Inedite di Sav. Introd. di Pad. Marchese.

original of the time of the renowned Dominican, a very fine painting and most probably by a scholar of Fra Bartolomeo, representing the head and bust only. The other is a copy of a very indifferent oil painting, taken (for Mr. Macarthy) from the original which is in the cell at San Marco. It is half size, and represents the Father with one hand holding a crucifix, and the other uplifted as if in an attitude of contemplation. The Florentine gem by Giovanni della Corniole, from a cast of which the small portrait (engraved for this work) is taken, is doubtless the most authentic portrait in existence."

Mr. Macarthy also possesses an old and good portrait, said to be (and as he thinks truly) of Fra Matteo Maruffi, one of the fellow-sufferers of Fra Girolamo.

There was a bust of Savonarola made, many years after his death, in porphyry, by a sculptor of Fiesole, named Checco del Tadda, a contemporary of Fra Girolamo (testa bellissima), says Fra Timoteo di Perrugia. Of this bust mention is made by P. Marchese (in his publication "Documenti intorne al Savonarola," ap Arch. Istor. Ital. Appen. 25); of which there is an account in a letter of Padre Poggio, prefixed to the Life of Savonarola, by Burlamacchi (in the Lucca ed. 1764; Letter xxxv.). Michael Angelo, in his old age, recalling some passages of Savonarola's sermons, which inspired him with the ideas of one of the finest pieces of Italian poetry, in remembrance of the martyred Friar, suggested a symbol for the reverse of the medal struck by Leone Aretino, in honour of Savonarola, the figure of a blind man led by a dog, and a motto for the medal—"*Docebo iniquos vias tuas et impii ad te convertentur.*" *

The engraved gem, with the likeness of Savonarola, the work of Giovanni delle Corniole (so called, from several of his best works having been executed in Cornelian), in the Royal Gallery of Florence, has been copied and engraved in Italy, the first time in 1818 (*Vide Reggimento degli Stati di Fra G. Savonarola, &c.*). This admirable object of ancient art is valuable moreover for being the best likeness of Savonarola in existence. It is erroneously asserted by several writers that this gem was executed by Corniole, by the orders of Lorenzo de Medici. The word "Martyr" occurs in the inscription round the face. It was executed in the old age of Corniole, after the deaths both of Lorenzo and Savonarola.

* Prediche de Sav. vol. unico. Fir. 1845.

From the engraved gem, the portrait prefixed to this work (enlarged to double the size of the original) is taken.

The accompanying medallion is a fac-simile of one existing in the Florentine gallery, taken from the copy in the "Academie Royale des Inscriptions," of Paris.

SVP·TERAM CITO ET VELOCITER·
·CLA·DIVS·DOMINI·
HIERONYMVS·A·FER·VIR·DOCTISS·ORDINIS·PR·
EDICHARVM

THE LIFE AND MARTYRDOM OF SAVONAROLA.

INTRODUCTION.

THE STATE OF ITALY, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS, PREVIOUSLY TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY. FLORENCE AND ITS REPUBLIC UNDER THE MEDICI.

Déchirans à l'envi leur propre République,
Lions contre Lions, parens contre parens,
Combattent follement POUR LE CHOIX DES TYRANS.
BOILEAU, *Sat.*

——"Dimmi la cagione
Perchè l'ha tanta discordia assalita?
Superbia, invidia e avarizia sono
Le tre faville c'hanno i cuori accesi."
DANTE, *L'Inferno*, Canto vi.

DENINA, in a parallel between the Republics of Italy of the middle ages, and those of ancient Italy under the Romans, observes, "Whoever reads in the annals of Lombardy, and in the old chronicles of Tuscany, how the free people passed so quickly into external wars, and civil tumults, from war to peace, from amity to enmity, and kept up a perpetual succession of alliances, insurrections and discord—might imagine the accounts were reproduced descriptions, under different names, of the wars of the Romans with the Latins and with the Volsci, and the continual quarrels of the people with the Patricians, and of the senate with the tribunes; and perhaps, in reading

the Florentine History of Scipio Ammirato, one might fancy he had before him the work of Livy rendered into Italian.

"The mode of intimating and making wars, and concluding peace, that was practised in ancient Italy in the times of Camillus and of Pyrrhus, does not materially differ from that of the times of Frederick the Second and of Manfred.

"And within towns and cities also, alike were the haughtiness of the nobles towards the people, and the injustice of the people in their demands when they began to feel their own strength, and to meddle in matters of government. The one and the other, I say, were animated with the same spirit, influenced by the same motives, and subjected to the same revolutionary results. . . . We observe, also, a most striking resemblance in the destinies of the tyrants of ancient Italy and those of the Tuscan and Lombard republics, of the times of Frederick the Second and his successors; and might very well find striking points of resemblance between Eccellino de Romano and Tarquin the Proud; the Marquis Oberto Palavicino, Buoso de Doara, Martino della Torre, and Porsenna, king of Chiusi, and princes of his character; and similar resemblances between the supreme magistrates of the ancient Tuscans, Latins, Campani, and Samnites, with the despots of the middle ages. Amongst them we have seen how free and independent cities sometimes come under the yoke of one powerful citizen, or under the dominion of a tyrant of some other neighbouring city, in such a way as a lord of Padua, or Milan, or Verona, obtained the government of many other Lombard cities, alike free and independent."*

The Roman empire perished with Augustulus, in 476. It revived (for a short time) under Charlemagne, about 776, after a lapse of 300 years. The different hordes of barbarians, who had taken possession of Italy, had become enervated by idleness and sensual enjoyments; and the remains of the old Roman race had sunk into barbarism, not far removed from that of their conquerors, being involved in continual raids and

* Denina, Rivol. d'Ital. t. ii. p. 383.

petty warfare, and living in a state of turbulent, lawless independence. Society was composed of different classes of marauders; a privileged order, having power to maintain their position without commerce, arts, or agriculture; and a serf class, the people of which were held to have been born for the use and advantage of counts and barons, feudal chieftains, and military commanders of those times.

The power that revived the empire of the west, and filled up the gap in history between Augustulus and Charlemagne, was recognized by all the barbarian races settled in Italy, and likewise by the remnant of the old Roman stock, now mingled with them in a chaos, wherein the social elements of life lay in utter confusion.

"From that hour," says an elegant writer, "the barbarian tribes acquired a new relation—one that attached them all simultaneously to a grand idea of general and permanent association. This was the beginning of modern Europe."*

But what was to maintain this association in Italy, when the power of the empire proved insufficient, as it did in Gaul, and Germany, after the death of Charlemagne, to sustain its mighty mission, and when the new empire came to an end with the founder of it?

Guizot in part answers that question; "I believe I am not saying too much in affirming that it was by the Church, Christendom was preserved in those ages. As to the conservative influence of civil government, of law, of opinion, they had absolutely no existence; in that very crisis, too, when it is certain that nothing but a society strongly organised (as was the Church) could have been able to cope with such disasters, and to come out victorious from such a hurricane.†

"It was the Church," he observes, "with its institutions, its hierarchy, its power, that arrayed itself firmly against the internal dissolution of the ancient social order against barbarism; it conquered the barbarians, it became the link, the medium, the

* Dr. Miley's Rome under Paganism, vol. ii. p. 328.

† Hist. de la Civil. en Europe, p. 51.

propagating principle of civilization between the Roman world and the world of the barbarians."

Leo the Third, from the mountains of Isauria, had ascended the throne of the East, A.D. 726. "Ignorant of sacred and profane letters," as we are told by Gibbon, "the martial peasant was inspired with an hatred of images." Having undertaken the reformation of religion, "he demolished the images of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints; and *a smooth surface* of plaster was spread over the walls of the churches of Constantinople and the provinces."*

In the reign of his successor, Copronymus, a general assembly was convoked in A.D. 754, all visible symbols of Christ, except in the Eucharist, were declared blasphemous or heretical; and the destruction of all representations of saints, &c. was ordained. From this period the war was fiercely waged of the Iconoclasts with monks and monasteries, under the mask of zeal for the purification of religion; and this war soon spread from the east to the west.

It was after the unavailing remonstrance of Gregory the Second to the Emperor Leo, against the sacrilegious outrages committed by his orders, in churches and all holy places, that the separation of the eastern empire from its former western dominions was formally declared. The exercise of moral influence for some time sufficed for the protection of the territorial possessions of the Church, obtained by bequests and donations during several preceding centuries.

It soon, however, became necessary to employ an armed force to defend them against the Ex-Archate of Ravenna, and eventually to make war, on the lord of those territories, in conjunction with the new sovereign of the Franks, and the ally of the Pontiffs, King Pepin.

The diadem of the Cæsars was placed on the brow of Charlemagne, the son and successor of Pepin, in the year 800, and the Church profited largely in temporal matters by the solemnity. Charlemagne made wars, avowedly to defend and extend the possessions of the Church.

* Decline and Fall of the Rom. Em. chap. xxxv.

The wars of Pepin and Charlemagne, we are told, were just and necessary wars, which gave rights of conquest, and disposal of territory to the victors over the conquered people and captured territory. Whether their wars were just and necessary, is a question which might be more easily debated than determined.

When the temporal power had been assumed by the Popes, it is admitted by Gibbon, "the ruins of Rome presented the sad image of depopulation and decay." The people of Rome, and of the papal territory, were benefitted by coming under the power of the see of Rome. They were found by it in barbarity and anarchy. The inhabitants, the offspring of slaves and strangers, were despicable, we are told, even in the eyes of the northern barbarians who had conquered them. "In the name of a Roman," says the bishop Luitprand, "we indicate whatever is base, whatever is cowardly, whatever is perfidious; the extremes of avarice and luxury that can prostitute the dignity of human nature."*

It is universally allowed, the influence of the Holy See in government matters was a beneficent one, wherever it was exercised. Those of the ancient inhabitants who had been scattered over the face of Italy by barbarian chiefs and feudal lords, wherever the power of the Popes prevailed, returned to their old cities, towns, and hamlets; and those small gatherings of people in time became the nuclei of young republican institutions.

"The originators of those young republics," says Denina, "were of the old Latin races, and of the stock of the Etruscans, the Sabines, the Marses, the Volsci, and the Herni."

But the remnant of that old Roman stock had assuredly terribly degenerated in the eighth and ninth centuries.

We find the Holy See largely, if not chiefly, indebted to Pepin and Charlemagne for its territorial possessions and temporal sovereignty. But if the obligation had never been incurred, Catholic doctrine teaches that the Church would have subsisted in its integrity all the same.

* Ap. Gibbon's Dec. and Fall, ch. xxxv.

All experience demonstrates that the less secularized a church is, the more spiritual is its government and its teachers. All reasoning on the results of that experience leads to the conclusion that the more spiritualized is a church, the more likely it must be to be regarded with favour by its divine founder.

Belief, then, in the doctrine above referred to, must necessarily cause the protection, the patronage, the profuse bounty of Constantine, Pepin, and Charlemagne to the Church, to be regarded as a great calamity.

The fierce contests between Henry the Fourth, of Germany, and Pope Gregory the Seventh, involved Italy in a protracted warfare between the spiritual and temporal powers.

"Up to the middle of the eleventh century," says Dr. Doyle, "when Pope Gregory the Seventh appeared, the papal power, to which he gave a certain form and consistency, though gradually gaining strength, was not such as could create alarm. Its progress was silent, and it was much more occupied in advancing the interests of religion amongst the nations newly converted, than in making encroachments upon princes."

The new Pontiff, with powers of intellect unsurpassed by any of his predecessors or successors, with purposes high and holy as ever were had in view by a prelate of his Church, if the Protestant pastor, Voight, his biographer, has written truly of him, found the Church plunged in difficulties and disorders fatal to religion—in simony, corruption, scandalous living, in all the evils that had sprung up from an utter confusion of jurisdictions; the secular power seeking and obtaining temporal advantages from a control over spiritual offices, the spiritual power secularizing itself for the patronage of princes, and the protection of worldly possessions. Hildebrand attempted to stem the torrent of iniquity which surrounded religion, to extinguish simony, to reform and renovate the administration of spiritual affairs, but the means at his disposal were inadequate to that end; the evils of the connexion of spiritual and temporal power in his own office were too great even for his vast intellect and exalted virtues to surmount.

Views, however, of a very different kind, with respect to Gregory the Seventh, from those of the Protestant pastor, Voight, have been taken by a very eminent Roman Catholic Prelate, the Right Rev. Dr. Doyle, of this Pontiff and his acts.

"This Pope," says Dr. Doyle, "excited by an extraordinary desire to extinguish simony, and to render all mankind as fervent Christians as he was himself, conceived it necessary for his purpose to subject all the nations of the earth to his sway. He assembled his counsellors, and delivered to them and to the holy apostles, whom he frequently addressed, the most impassioned harangues. He resisted the Emperor Henry the Fourth, not with the prudent caution used by his predecessors, but with violence. Not accustomed to meet with opposition, he waxed angry,—he took the empire into his own hands," &c.

Denina attributes the consolidation of the independence of the Italian republics to the contentions of the Emperor, Henry the Fourth of Germany, and Gregory the Seventh, which left it out of the power of that unprincipled Emperor to prevent the establishment of the several republics which had sprung up amidst the ruins of the empire of Charlemagne, in places that had been either abandoned, desolated, or neglected by the Emperor or the Pontiffs, or their several adherents, in the course of the long struggle between the chiefs of the temporal and the spiritual power of Europe.

But the very ardour of the desire of the young republics to be enabled to resist foreign aggression, eventually led to the overthrow of most of their governments by domestic treasons.

They raised forces for defence more than were required for their security, or their revenues enabled them to sustain.

They realized in the twelfth century the picture of the horrors of a distracted people, involved in ceaseless, and apparently causeless wars, that has been left by a great historian of ancient times.

"The chiefs of the factions had each of them a specious name and pretext. Some held forth a political equality among the citizens, and some a plan of a more temperate aristocracy.

Their speeches had a reference to the common prize of contest, power and sovereignty; and every art was used by the antagonists to defeat each other. Having obtained their ends, either by unjust sentences, or by acts of violence, they were prepared to fill up the measure of their crimes and iniquity."*

The Suabian dynasty of the German empire, from the time of Henry the Fourth to that of Frederic the First, surnamed Barbarossa, who was crowned in 1155, was always true to its old original hostility to the see of Rome.

When the deputies of the Senate of Rome addressed the newly-crowned Emperor on the subject of their rights, Frederic replied to them, "Rome is no longer what it was: Charlemagne and others have conquered it, and I am your master." In reply to letters of the Pope, he said—"He held his empire from God and the election of princes, and not by the bounty of the Popes of Rome." Frederic proved to the latter, as far as depended on him, that he had the power of electing them, or of involving their elections in confusion, strife, and schism, at his will.

He contemplated the establishment of an universal monarchy, of which he was to be the emperor, and so far had acted on the project he had formed, that his chancellor was instructed by him to substitute for the style and title of the European monarchs, that of kings of provinces.† The see of Rome stood in the way of the reckless ambition of the prince, who projected an undertaking which the genius of Alexander the Great, with all his daring, could not have accomplished.

Frederic proclaimed himself to be the source of all authority, temporal and spiritual—"The Living Law."

The Pope Alexander the Third had to fly for refuge to France from the intrigues and acts of violence in his capital, of which Frederic was the author.

The emperor was excommunicated in 1168. In 1176,

* Thucid. lib. i. sect. 80.

† Hist. de Saint Louis par M. le Marquis de Villanueva, t. i. p. 238. 8vo. *Paris*, 1830.

Frederic, after his defeat near Como by the Milanese, had to sue for peace to the Pontiff. A reconciliation took place in Venice. Frederic kissed the feet of his holiness, he served the Pope at mass in the cathedral, he led his mule in the public square of St. Marc. He, Frederic, the projector of an universal empire, who was to have been the lord of the wide world—the Living Law to all mankind, in temporal as well as spiritual matters, had to bend his knee in humble obeisance to the power of the successor of the fisherman, and to hold the bridle of his mule in the face of the people of his court, to whom he had proclaimed himself the master of Rome and of its Pontiffs.

Frederic atoned for his mistake and his misdeeds, by a crusade in 1189. He gained two victories over the Turks, and died near Tarsus in Cilicea, in 1190.

Barbarossa was succeeded by his grandson, Frederic the Second, who had been elected king of the Romans in 1196.

His intervention in the affairs of Italy was not long delayed after his accession to the empire. He came into Italy, we are told, with a firm purpose of crushing the young republics, and establishing a German influence throughout the length and breadth of the land, from Sicily to Lombardy, where ultimately in Milan he placed the iron crown upon his head. He effected however, says Denina, little more by his "jornadas" in Italy than his coronation, the devastation of some lands, and the death of some thousands of people in this his first expedition. In his second, he effected little more than resuscitating ancient discords, and playing off the old factions with the Guelphs and Ghibelines, for the promotion of his German interest.

He maintained an external appearance of amity with the Holy See till after his coronation, on which occasion he swore to be the champion of the Church, and a promoter of the crusades against the infidels. Frederic, nevertheless, was of the category of those unbelievers whom he swore to extirpate, if he has not been greatly slandered and wrongfully anathematized on divers occasions.

Frederic the Second, like his grandfather, indulged in impe-

rial projects of universal empire, and inherited, moreover, all the rancorous hatred of his race against the Holy See. He declined to fulfil the engagements into which he had entered with the Pontiff at the time of his coronation in regard to the crusades, and was excommunicated by the Pope. The thunders of Rome, however, began to be too frequently fulminated to be feared by unscrupulous princes. Frederic set out for Palestine, and was restored to the Church, and in the year following, entered into a truce with the Mahometan Sultan, for a period of ten years.

The Pope Gregory the Ninth disapproved of this step, accused him of having executed his sworn promise in an illusory manner, and *de novo* anathematised him.

The Pope assembled an army, seized on a great part of Apulia, and invested the father-in-law of Frederic, John of Brienne, with the sovereignty. The son of Frederic the Second, Henry, king of the Romans, in the midst of those civil wars, declared against his father, and caused a report of his death to be disseminated. This false rumour occasioned a general revolt in Sicily and throughout Italy.

Frederic thought it was time to abandon the crusade, and came to the defence of his crown. He proceeded with his army to Southern Italy, seized on Romagna, the Marshes of Ancona, the Duchies of Spoletto and Benevento, and besieged Rome.

The soldiers of the army of the Pope, who were called Guelphs, bore a badge with a representation of two keys on their shoulders. Those of the army of Frederic, designated Ghibelines, bore a cross for their distinctive symbol. The troops of Frederic prevailed in most rencontres over those of the Holy See.

A reconciliation, however, was effected in 1230, advantageous to the Pontiff. The emperor undertook to pay 130,000 marks of silver, and to restore all the places he had taken. His son was then in revolt in Germany. Frederic convoked a diet in Mayence in 1233, had his son condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and his second son, Conrad, elected king of the Romans.

In a short time Frederic was master of nearly all Italy, and

again at war with the Pope. Rome was besieged by him, and during the siege, the atrocities committed by him on the Guelphs he had taken prisoners were unparalleled.

When the siege of Rome was raised, his arms were next turned against the territories in which the Templars had possessions. The chronicles of the time state, "Churches and convents were ravaged by him, sacred things profaned, the graves of holy people were violated, and their ashes scattered to the winds. Ecclesiastics were cast into prisons, and some of them had their eyes torn out, others were banished or put to death by the sword or in the flames. Counts and barons of the Guelph party were executed on the scaffold, others perished of hunger and hardship in the filth and vermin of subterraneous dungeons of old fortresses. The homes of the Guelphs were utterly devastated. Ezzelino, a furious and sanguinary Ghibeline, caused to perish twelve thousand citizens of Padua, shut up in the amphitheatre of Verona."*

That all the atrocities committed in these Guelph and Ghibeline wars were not perpetrated by Frederic and his army, we have evidence in the admissions of Pope Gregory the Ninth, in one of his epistles to the effect, "That the army of Italy, of that Lombard league which defended the Holy See, with the Pope's legate in the camp representing it there, had committed shocking acts of inhumanity on their prisoners."

Gregory the Ninth gives expression to some generous sentiments, in a letter dated the 29th of May, 1230, addressed to Cardinal Pelagius, legate in the camp of the army of Sicily, in those unhappy wars waged by the sovereign of Rome with the Suabian dynasty of Germany, in which the fierce animosities of the Guelph and Ghibeline factions were played off against each other by the high contending powers, spiritual and temporal.

"It is the will of God," says Gregory the Ninth, "that to preserve the liberty of the Church, humility does not prevent the defence of it by arms, *provided that defence does not go beyond the limits that humanity prescribes.* Hence it follows, that the

* Feller. t. iii. 636.

defence of ecclesiastical liberty ought not to recur, *except rarely and with reluctance,* to other arms but spiritual ones, against the tyrants who persecute the Church. That he ought not to desire bloodshed or spoil, but should seek rather to bring back those who have gone astray into the right road, and leave to him his own liberty. It is unworthy of an army under Christ's banner, as we have learned, to our great sorrow, has recently happened, to put to death those whose lives might be preserved, and to disfigure the image of the Creator. Ah, my brother, it does not comport with the office of one whose duty it is to call back into the bosom of the Church, which is their mother, the children who have deserted her, and to irritate them by exulting in the sight of their sufferings and of their blood. The Church which extends its protection to criminals, even to save them from death, should be very far from the guilt of mutilating or slaying them. For these reasons, we command you to preserve from all injury those who fall into the hands of our troops, and to treat them so that they may rejoice to have exchanged a state of culpable licentiousness for that of Christian captivity. You shall instruct the commanders henceforth to abstain from all kinds of violence, and the penalty of incurring our indignation, and of being fined to the amount that shall be determined by us."*

In 1239, Frederic was once more excommunicated by the Pope, and a little later he was again excommunicated by Pope Innocent the Fourth, and deposed also in the council of Lyons, in 1245, after the Pope had in vain endeavoured to effect a reconciliation with him.

The fortunes of Frederic from this time declined, both in Italy and in Germany. He was beaten by the Lombards, and in 1246 the claims of Henry of Thuringia, and in 1247 of William, Count of Holland, to the imperial throne, were preferred to his.†

* Rohrbacher, tome xviii. p. 365.

† In 1250, Frederick the Second ended his unfortunate career at Firenzuela, at the age of fifty-seven years; some say of sorrow and chagrin, others state at the hands of one of his illegitimate sons.

Frederic, with all his faults, was a patron of learning, the founder of the university of Padua, one of the most accomplished troubadours of his time; and in his testament there is evidence that he was not so utterly destitute of religious sentiments as he is represented to have been; as he ordered his son Conrad to restore all he had taken from the Church, and bequeathed 100,000 ounces of gold for the succour of the holy land.

We find the disputes of Frederic and his predecessors with the Holy See referred to by a pontiff in the sixteenth century. Pope Paul the Third addressed a pontifical letter to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, dated the 25th of April, 1544, remonstrating against an edict issued by the Emperor, wherein, with the professed view of putting a stop to religious dissensions, it was intimated, that at the next imperial diet something should be determined with respect to the calling of a council to deliberate on ecclesiastical matters. His Holiness complains of the Emperor promising to call a council without previously consulting him, thereby claiming an illegal jurisdiction, and undertaking an investigation that was alien to his office.

In that remarkable document, Charles is thus reminded of the antecedents of his predecessors :—

"The first of the emperors we read of who bróke out in open revolt and contempt of the Holy See was Anastasius. Gelatius, the Roman Pontiff, admonished him not to favour the party of Acatius, bishop of Constantinople, who had been condemned by the Holy See; but he disobeyed the admonition. Hormisdus, the successor of Gelasius, having sent delegates to him to urge him to desist from communion with heretics, he first heard them with contempt, and then dismissed them with insult. At length, the divine anger struck him dead by lightning. He was succeeded in his impiety, but at intervals, by other emperors, as Mauritius, Constans, the second son of Justinian, Constantinus, Pogonatus, Philip, and Leo.

"But it was tedious to number up those who perished by deaths, differing in their nature, but all violent or ignominious,

after having been previously stripped of their power and dignity, that in them divine justice might manifest itself in taking vengeance on the disobedient. The series might be continued as far as that Henry, who had long most grievously vexed the Apostolic See, but at length made captive at Lodi by his own son, died in prison. Divine justice, by a most just retribution, punishing by a son, him who had in so many ways molested and disregarded the authority of one whom Divine Providence had set over him in the Church, in the place of a father. The same thing may be said of Frederic the Second, except that his death by strangulation was more disastrous, inasmuch as his own son was the executioner."*

The son of Frederic the Second, Conrad, his legitimate heir, but not his recognized successor, was poisoned a few years after his father's death. He left a son, named also Conrad; this unfortunate youth, the grandson of Frederic the Second, perished on the scaffold, in his seventeenth year, and with him the last of the Suabian princes.

Rodolph of Hapsbourg was elected king of the Romans in 1273, and governed his states like a Christian sovereign. Italy and the Holy See, during his reign, enjoyed peace. He died in 1291. It is somewhat strange, that notwithstanding the

* The document from which this extract is taken is written with ability, and with equal moderation and affectionate regard for the illustrious sovereign to whom it was addressed. Calvin, however, sets no bounds to the fury of his rage in dealing with it. He uses the following language in speaking of the writer, Pope Paul the Third:—"Old dotard" with "his half-rotten carcass," "unparalleled monster," "vile priest," "wicked apostate," "this madman," "Roman antichrist," "savage beast," "impious man," "Heliogabalus," "Saturn," "servant of the father of lies," "less than the devil whom he invokes"!!!

Theodore Beza, in his life of Calvin, says, "He (Calvin) was naturally of a keen temper, and this had been increased by the very laborious life which he had led. *But the Spirit of the Lord had so taught him to command his anger, that no word was heard to proceed from him unbecoming a good man.*"

Vide Life of Calvin, Introd. p. xcix., and Letter of Paul the Third to Charles the Fifth, in the works of Calvin, translated by Beveridge, Cal. Trans. Soc. ed. 8. i. *Edin.* 1844. vol. i. p. 246.

great virtues and zeal for religion of this good sovereign, the Holy See constantly procrastinated his coronation as Emperor of Germany. To his various and urgent applications to the Popes, his supplications to this effect received only promises of compliance at very distant periods. Before the last appointed period, his death released the Court of Rome from a promise which it had shewn manifest signs of reluctance to fulfil.

Albert, duke of Austria, son of Rodolph of Hapsbourg, counting on being recognized the successor of his father to the throne, took possession of the crown jewels. The electors, however, made choice of the Count Adolphus of Nassau, who was crowned king of the Romans in 1292. In his pecuniary embarrassments he had recourse to the English sovereign, and obtained a subsidy of £100,000. For this favour he entered into an alliance with Edward the First, against Philip the Fair, of France.

The Germans took offence at their sovereign becoming a mercenary dependant on the bounty of a foreign sovereign, and for this and other reasons he was deposed in 1298; and Albert, duke of Austria, son of Rodolph, was elected by three of the electors.

By their counsel, Albert applied to the Pope, Boniface the Eighth, to confirm his election, and the deposition of Adolphus.

"Some sort of ratification at Rome of the imperial title appears to have been at all times sought for, and obtained, if not as a condition necessary for its legality, at least as something extremely useful for the undisputed exercise of its authority. The popes, long before the time of Gregory, had been the only representatives of the honour, if not the absolute sovereigns of Rome: as such, they claimed to exercise the rights which originally resided in the senate and people. They were, moreover, the ministers of religion, and entitled to anoint and crown the emperor elect. They united all these powers, and all these claims; and by commixion, rendered them less intelligible, but not less mysterious or sacred. They interfered,

out of Rome as well as within it, at the election of the emperors; and causes similar to those which created their influence in conferring, ratifying, or sanctioning the title to the empire, enabled them afterwards to share in defining the number, the rights, and the proceedings, of the imperial electors."*

The new king, Adolphus, was crowned in his own country, and excommunicated in Rome. In the meantime, having sued for mercy to the Holy See, and submitted the rights of his throne to the decision of the Pontiff, he was pardoned and recognized by Boniface.

In 1308, Albert perished by the hands of assassins, and Henry, Count of Luxembourg, was elected in his stead king of the Romans.

In the same year, Henry the Seventh of Germany was succeeded in the dignity of king of the Romans, by Albert of Austria. In 1311, Albert made a descent on Italy, more of a diplomatic than a warlike kind. He traversed Italy, seeking to re-establish German influence, feudal rights, and imperial authority. In some cities he was received as a sovereign with acclamation, in others he was repulsed.

He alternately employed menaces and caresses, conciliation and severity; but in 1313, broken down in health, he abandoned Italy, leaving every part of it more distracted than he found it. Lewis the Bavarian, and Frederick of Austria, contested the succession of Henry the Seventh, to the year 1322, when Lewis triumphed over his competitor. In 1327, he made a descent on Italy, levied heavy contributions wherever he went, and took on himself, in 1328, on his own proper authority, to depose the Pope John the Twenty-second, and to place the Antipope, Peter of Carvara, on the chair of the Apostle, in the cathedral of St. Peter's. But the following year he was compelled to abandon Italy, "where," says Muratori, "he left an abominable memory with the Guelphs, and one, perhaps, not less odious with the Ghibelines."†

* Rt. Rev. Dr. Doyle's Essay on Catholic Claims.

† Annal. d'Italia. de Muratori.

Charles the Fourth was crowned king of the Romans in 1346, by the interest and influence of Clement the Sixth. He came twice into Italy, in 1354 and in 1368. "But instead of establishing his authority and bringing peace," says Tiraboschi, "he was compelled to return speedily to his own country, ill-satisfied with the reception he met with, and gratified only with the gold he carried away with him.

"He was succeeded by Wenceslaus, his son, who was elected king of the Romans in 1378; but in 1399, this sovereign, on account of his crimes, was deposed, and succeeded by Robert, Duke of Bavaria."*

Of the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, whose feuds so powerfully influenced the destinies of Italy, it may not be displaced to say a few words.

Carlo Denina, in his work, "Della Revoluzioni d'Italia," treating of the origin of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, says: "There flourished in Germany two families of distinction, one called Arrighi di Ghibelinga, and the other of Guelf, of Altdorfio, in which, by the marriage of Azzo d'Este with Cunagonda, daughter of Guelf the Third, originated the house of Este, therefore called Guelf-Estense, from which descended the Dukes of Modena, and those of Brunswick and Hanover. Of the Guelph family for many years there were many famous dukes; and those gaining power and credit with the same emperors, had many times disturbed the quiet of the state. In the reign of Henry the Fifth, the two families became happily united in relationship, by Frederick of Swabia taking for wife Judith, daughter of Henry, the dark Duke of Bavaria, the sister of Guelph the Sixth, who was at that time the head of the house of Altdorfio, thus uniting in Frederick Barbarosa the blood of the two rival families. He, finding himself head of one of the factions, and near relation, as the son of a sister, by whom he was head of the other, there was reason to hope that such a person, raised to the Imperial throne, would keep the factions united, and bring back tranquillity and concord into the repub-

* Tiraboschi, tomo v. parte i. p. 14.

lic, when in Frankfort he was declared King, not without the intervention of some Italian lords." *

"The Guelphs and Ghibelines," says Machiavelli, "whose dissensions afterwards proved the destruction of all Italy, were first called by those names in the city of Pistoia. The faction which sided with the Church was called Guelphs, the faction which was in alliance with the Emperors of Germany, and at variance with the Popes, was denominated Ghibelines." †

But the best account of those fierce rival factions is that of Corio, in his admirable History of Milan:

Corio says, in the city of Verona there was anciently two factions; one was called the faction of Saint Boniface, this was the Guelph party, which espoused the cause of the Church; another was styled the faction of Tegio, which was always leagued with the German interests of the Emperors; and a third was called the faction of the Scala, which adhered mainly to the views of the former. When the magistrates of the Pontiff Boniface were driven from Verona, the Ghibeline party had introduced Ezzelino, after which the party of the three brothers of the Scala family obtained dominion.

Elsewhere Corio observes:—"In the year 1227, the Emperor of Germany, Frederic the Second, convoked a meeting of the principal nobility of all the Italian states bordering on Lombardy, near Cremona, to treat of his coronation in Milan; which meeting not being successful, he came to Verona, and there, with Ezzelino's friends and many other factions of the Ghibelines, he combined against the Roman Church. On hearing of these events, the Pope Gregory, under pain of excommunication, commanded the Emperor to join the crusade against the infidels. This proceeding so much enraged the Emperor, that he collected an army against the Church, and passing into Sicily, occupied Apulia, for which act he was excommunicated by the Pope." ‡

At the commencement of the thirteenth century, the deadly

* Denina, Revoluzioni d'Italia, ed. 12mo. lib. ii. p. 280. *Venice*, 1779.
† Historie Florentine, lib. i.
‡ Historia de Milano, parte ii. p. 88.

feuds of the Guelphs and Ghibelines prevailed, even in the states of the Holy See; and one of their factions was made use of in the quarrels of Boniface the Eighth against his enemies.

Tiraboschi, treating of the civil state of Italy in the fourteenth century, observes:

"The love of liberty and independence, which in so many Italian cities had, in the preceding century, put arms in the hands of citizens to maintain their newly-acquired rights, had already begun to produce an effect totally contrary to their desires. To present a bold front to their enemies, they were obliged to confide the command of their armies to some individuals, the most powerful of their citizens. And these commanders, after having begun to enjoy the privilege of authority and the power of governing masses of men in the midst of the turmoil of war, could not be made so easily to comprehend the obligation of depositing that authority and power in the breast of peace. It was sought to constrain them by force to return to the condition of private citizens. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Torriani, the Visconti, disputed the lordship of Milan and other cities of Lombardy. Azzo the Seventh, of Este, was lord of Ferrara, Modena, Reggio, Rovigo, and many more castles; the Scotti, in Piacenza; the Bisiraga, in Lodi; the Rusca, in Como; the Langoschi, in Pavia; the Avvocati, in Vercelli; the Brusati, in Novaria; the Maggi, in Brescia; the Corregeschi, in Parma; the Scaligari, in Verona; the Buonacorsi, in Mantua;* all these maintained their power, either by the suffrages of their fellow citizens or by force of arms, if they had rendered themselves masters of the city, or they combined together, or became enemies, and sought to confirm or to extend their power. Ample territories in Romagna had John, Marquis of Montserrat; the Lords of Polentani began also to have large possessions in Ravenna; the Ordelaffi, in Forli; the Malastesta, in Rimini; and others in other places. Florence also, and several other cities in Tuscany divided into

* The ancestors of the mother of Savonarola.

those well-known factions of Bianchi and Neri, went on lacerating themselves and their country lamentably; and scarcely was there a part of Italy where one did not encounter the strife of factions and wars." *

Tiraboschi, to all these calamities, adds one crowning misfortune in 1305—the transfer of the Holy See to Avignon—"Colpo che fu all' Italia sommamente fatale."

During "the captivity" of the Church in Avignon, Italy was harassed by domestic tyrants and factions, that were sustained or countenanced by foreign powers, in their efforts to disunite and weaken one another, and promote the interests of other powers. Occasionally, too, we find the German sovereigns making incursions into Italy; always sowing discords and dissensions, and never effecting any great or important object.

Macaulay enumerates four grand revolts against the Church of Rome, since her authority was established in Western Christendom.

"The first of these insurrections," says Macaulay, "broke out in the region where the beautiful language of *Oc* was spoken. That country, singularly favoured by nature, was, in the twelfth century, the most flourishing and civilized portion of Western Europe. It was in no wise a part of France. It had a distinct political existence, a distinct national character, distinct usages, and a distinct speech. The soil was fruitful and well cultivated; and amidst the corn-fields and vineyards arose many rich cities, each of which was a little republic, and many stately castles, each of which contained a miniature of an imperial court."

The doctrines of the ancient Manichees, dressed up in new garbs in the Levant, had been conveyed into the provinces of Languedoc and Provence by the merchants and traders who came from the East to the maritime places bordering on those provinces. Those doctrines spread rapidly; and the leading one of them seemed to be hostility to the clergy of the Church of Rome. This feeling prevailed first among the feudal lords and military

* Tiraboschi, Storia Della Letteratura Italiana, tomo v. parte i. p. 3. Ed. 8vo. *Fer.* 1807.

chiefs; then it found an exponent in the poetry of the troubadours; and finally it gained ground more than could have been imagined, not only among the inhabitants of the towns, but the rural population.

"The danger to the hierarchy," continues Macaulay, "was indeed formidable. Only one transalpine nation had emerged from barbarism; and that nation had thrown off all respect for Rome. Only one of the vernacular languages of Europe had yet been extensively employed for literary purposes; and that language was a machine in the hands of heretics. The geographical position of the sectaries made the danger peculiarly formidable. They occupied a central region, communicating directly with France, with Italy, and with Spain.

"A war, distinguished even among wars of religion by merciless atrocity, destroyed the Albigensian heresy, and with that heresy the prosperity, the civilization, the literature, the national existence, of what was once the most opulent and enlightened part of the great European family. Rome, in the meantime, warned by that fearful danger from which the exterminating swords of her crusaders had narrowly saved her, proceeded to revise and to strengthen her whole system of polity. At this period were instituted the Order of Francis, the Order of Dominic, the Tribunal of the Inquisition. The new spiritual police was everywhere. No alley in a great city, no hamlet on a remote mountain, was unvisited by the begging friar. The simple Catholic, who was content to be no wiser than his fathers, found, wherever he turned, a friendly voice to encourage him. The path of the heretic was beset by innumerable spies; and the Church, lately in danger of utter subversion, now appeared to be impregnably fortified by the love, the reverence, and the terror of mankind.

"The spiritual power in Italy throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in its various contests with the feudalism of those ages, sometimes successful, more frequently defeated, always militant, underwent many vicissitudes."

* Macaulay's Essay on Ranke's Lives. *Rev.*

Wherever it was successful, the material interests of the people, it is universally admitted, were benefitted by its protection, or the domination of its influence.

But whether the Church itself benefitted by its intervention in the political affairs of states—an intervention necessitated in those times by its own connection with temporal power and territorial dominion—is a question that a curt and flippant affirmation will not answer satisfactorily.

We find the contest of the spiritual with the temporal power —whenever entered into for mere political purposes or territorial interests—productive of great evils to the Church. We find Italy in those ages we have just referred to, with short intervals of repose on various occasions, a scene of strife and warfare between the partisans of rival competitors for the papal throne. We find the rival factions of the aristocracy and the democracy, of conflicting feudalism in all its branches, the champions of the Guelphs and Ghibelines, the Bianci and the Neri, the Piagnone and the Tepidi, the Pazzi and the Medici, always leagued with such competitors, or arrayed against them.

Boniface the Eighth, in 1294, brought the qualities that are fit for the protection of temporal interests and territorial possessions, into his contests with secular princes. He brought few to his great spiritual office of Supreme Pontiff, that were calculated to promote the interests of peace, or to establish the principles of the Gospel.

His continual interference with the affairs of foreign princes, his feuds and warfare with nearly all the rulers of the Christian commonwealth, were more mischievous to Italy, and more injurious to Catholicity, than all the ravages of the barbarians in Rome and its territory.*

The great intellectual energies of Innocent the Eighth, who was created Pontiff in 1447, were pushed—in the promotion of objects political, or at least auxiliary to the protection of temporal interests—to the same length of the spiritual and temporal power exercised by Boniface the Eighth. The king of Naples was excommunicated and deprived of his kingdom by his

Holiness, and subsequently, on submission, was pardoned and restored to his own dominions. In this pontificate, civil wars in which the diplomacy of the court of Rome was too frequently found engaged, prevailed in several parts of Italy. Among the unfortunate results of such intervention in the affairs of foreign countries, is to be accounted the sentence of excommunication and deposition of the king of Naples.

The removal of this sentence, on the king's submission, did not remove the evil impression it left on the minds of Catholic princes, that the motives for it were reasons of state, and that the interests of religion had not much to do with them.

The consequences of the quarrels of Innocent the Eighth with the king of Naples, extended to the times of Charles the Eighth of France, and the Neapolitan king, Ferdinand.

"Before Charles the Ninth of France had passed into Italy (in 1494), that country," says Machiavelli, "was under the dominion of the Popes, the Venetians, the King of Naples, the Duke of Milan, and the Florentines. The power most jealously watched by the smaller states was that of Rome and of Venice. To keep the Venetians in check, the union of all the other states was required; and to keep down the Papal influence, the power of the Pontiff was secretly neutralized, by engendering jealousies and animosities, and causes of disunion in Rome between the principal houses of the nobility. Diplomacy did the work of war in Italy in those times, without manifesting hostile intentions. These dissensions were sedulously promoted. The magnates of Rome were divided into two factions, the Orsini and the Colonnas, pains being taken," continues Machiavelli, "to have them with arms in their hands under the eyes of the Pontiffs, and thus to keep the court of Rome weak and disunited."*

On the other hand, the people of Lombardy, Genoa, Pisa, Ferrara, and Bologna, it cannot be doubted, had their subtle agents at work in Florence. It could be no small amount of intrigue, circumvention, diplomatic cajolery, corruption, and

* Mac. Hist. Flor. Del. Prin. cap. xi. p. 28.

state strategy, which could have kept the Guelphs and Ghibelines, the Pazzi and the Medici, the Strozzi, Ridolfi, Soderini, Carducci, the Viscontis, Sforzas, Ezzolinis, the Galeazzos, and Mirandolas in continual war, or preparations for mutual injury, for so long a period.

Florence and its Republic under the Medici.

Florence had its origin in the debris of the surrounding colonies of Fiesole,* which were established by Sylla, of which mention is made by Cicero.† The territory in which Florence was built, was called "Florentia, or ager Florentinus," and the Colonia, according to Borghini, was established about forty years before Christ.‡

In the eleventh century, Florence, the offshoot of the venerable city of Fiesole, having acquired sufficient strength to begin aggressions on neighbouring places, exhibited its young vigour and sense of obligation to the city that gave it birth, by an attack on it, and its utter demolition.

Nardi, whose "Historia Della citta de Firenze" begins with the affairs of 1494, describes the population as being divisible into three classes; the nobility, the bourgeosie, "*il popoli grasso,*" and the labouring poor, "*il popoli minuto.*" Other writers have sub-divided the aristocracy into three orders; the nobles, the grandees, and the gentry, "*delle famiglie.*" All were of one accord in respect to their hostility to the republic. It was ill regarded or abhorred by the aristocracy.§

The extremes often met in the Republic; the highest and the lowest class frequently coalesced to disconcert and to oppose the middle class. The nobles made use of the labouring poor against the *popolo grasso,* because they had no apprehensions of the former meddling in governmental affairs. The middle

* The ruins of the ancient Fiesole are about three miles from Florence.

† Cic. ii. in Catil.

‡ Discorsi di Borghini, Milano, 8vo. in 4 tomos. 1808, vol. i. p. 15.

§ Nardi, Hist. della Fir. p. 2.

class had to strengthen themselves as best they could, with governmental aid and influence against both.*

At various periods, prior to 1494, there had been serious differences between the court of Rome and the Florentine Republic, and there never was at any time a very cordial attachment—"I Fiorentini consueti certamente d'essere sempre reverenti e ossequiosi ma non mai sudditi á santa chiesa."†

In 1378, the contests between the Church and the Republic having been carried on with great rancour, with excommunications and interdicts on one side, and most abominable outrages on the other part, against sacred things and offices—*molte cose indegne et impie, contra la dignita e autorita ecclesiastica*—frightful tumults broke out in Florence between the partisans of the Church and those of the ruling powers, under the turbulent magistracy of the state, Salvestro de Medici being Gonfaloniere of Justice. On this occasion, the populace was called to arms from the windows of the Gonfaloniere's palace by his instructions, to repress the nobles who were giving umbrage to the rising power of the Medici. The people flew to arms, and the first use they made of them was to slaughter several citizens, to sack the churches and convents. This is called by the historian of Florence, "The first tumult of the excommunicated people of Florence."‡

The tumultuous populace and the scandalous abettors, the magistrates of the Signoria, with Salvestro de Medici, were, however, ultimately put down. Then came the magistracy of the Signori Priori, Luigi Guicciardini being Gonfalioniere, in the room of Salvestro de Medici. The former Signoria, with Salvestro de Medici, now stirred up the lowest class of the people, "*infima plebe*," to another revolt. Several of the insurgents having been taken up and tortured, "to get at the truth," Salvestro was found implicated in this conspiracy, and being examined, acknowledged the plot had been got up by

* Nardi, Le Storie di Firenza, p. 2. 4to. *Fir.* 1584.
† Ib. p. 3. ‡ Ib. p. 4.

persons who were desirous to see the honours and dignities restored to him, of which he had been deprived.

The new government acted with mistaken lenity towards Salvestro; he again conspired with the dregs of the people, and this time the rabble had a complete triumph. During their reign of terror, burning of houses, banishing of citizens, menacing supposed enemies, was the order of the day. The reigning rabble were pleased to make a *Cavaliere* of their patron Salvestro de Medici, and to support the dignity, they decreed that he should have the revenue of certain shops on the old bridge of Florence. It did not comport with the morality of the mob, that those of their order should commit robbery, when they committed the crime of arson. They erected a gallows in the great square of the city, to hang all offenders against the law that was laid down by them.

All persons who fell into the hands of the populace, who were in arms—and this government of malefacters was composed of about six thousand persons—were put to death. The domination of this rabble, due to the acts of Salvestro de Medici, was the greatest scourge, in the opinion of the principal Florentine historians, which which Florence was visited since the invasions of the Goths.*

Things, however, gradually settled down, and the republic was reduced into a state of order again in a period of time so brief, as to seem almost incredible; its powers were duly distributed, its administrative departments remodelled.

The dignity of the office of Gonfaliniére de Gustizia differed only from that of the eight members of the supreme magistracy of the Signori Priori, with the new adjunct *de Liberta;* in point of dignity, the Gonfalioniere had precedence of the other members of the supreme magistracy, and in some other privileges of slight importance.

The supreme magistracy sat for a term of two months in the palace, living there during this brief period of the administration of public affairs, together with their colleagues, who were

* Nardi, p. 6.

sixteen Gonfalonieres, representing the several companies, or divisions, of the people, and the twelve "good men," who were the appointed counsellors of the Signoria. The entire body of this magistracy, in the aggregate, was called the College, and also the Signoria, and the College. Besides this magistracy, there was the senate, whose numbers varied with the circumstances of the times. There was also the greater councils, in which ordinarily projects of laws were deliberated on and enacted; general plans and proposals, and private matters too, were examined into. Up to the year 1494, there were two of these councils, one called the Council of the People, in the business of which the citizens of the people class, *cittadini popolani*, intervened; the other the Common Council, in the affairs of which both nobles and people, *popolani*, took a part in common.

Magistrates were appointed by a special council, and the selection of persons for the magisterial office was made by scrutiny, a process which they called "lo squittino,"—a corruption of the Latin word *scrutinum*,—because they inquired minutely into the qualities of every man there was an idea of appointing. The scrutiny was made only once in every three or five years; and this being an innovation on the old custom of the republic, and the intervals between the scrutinies being far too long, great evils arose from the new mode of election.*

The special duties of the Gonfaloniere were as follows: with their subordinate Gonfalioniere, and several companies, to defend the city from domestic and foreign enemies when necessary: to preside over the safety of the city from fire, and to divide the city into four wards, and depute a certain number of the magistracy to act for him in case of fire in the several wards.

All the laws and provisions of a public or a private nature, proposed in the council of the Signoria, to have effect, should be submitted to the magisterial college, and sanctioned by it; afterwards submitted to the senate, and sanctioned by it, and finally, by the above-mentioned supreme council of the Signoria.†

When one considers the barbarism out of which this republic

* Nardi, p. 7. † Ibid.

had so recently emerged, and carefully examines the nature of those institutions, there is not a little to wonder at in the wisdom to which they owed their origin, and the various amendments that had been made in them.

The republic of Florence, before the time the power of the Medici became wholly predominant, had been frequently torn by factions, as we have seen. The Plebeians and the Patricians comprehended a variety of conflicting social influences and local interests. Eventually, these factions merged into the partizans of the Medici and Pazzi, the aristocracy and democracy of the state, and a little later, the adherents of the democracy, who looked to France for the restoration of the freedom of the Florentine republic. Of the latter, those who especially denounced the disorders of the Pontiff and the Court of Rome, were accounted not unjustly enemies to the Medici, and were accordingly looked on unfavourably by them.

It was the policy of the Medici, at all periods, to see Rome reduced to weakness, divided, discredited, and degraded in the sight of Christendom.

With all the dissensions that prevailed in the Florentine republic from the earliest times, there were elements of power and popular privileges tolerably well secured in it, that gave the Florentine State a sort of moral pre-eminence over the other Italian countries, while its physical strength was far inferior to that of Milan, Naples, and Venice. The government was essentially democratic, and the people were ever jealous of their liberty, and deemed the security of it depended on the state never being subjected to the will and rule of one man.

They were particularly jealous of the great families of Florence, whose power and influence were capable of becoming at any time dangerous to the republic, and very often unjustly suspicious of the designs of the leading citizens. This led to a kind of ostracism, which ultimately proved most injurious to the republic.

A vast number of Florentine refugees, called Fuorusciti, were to be found in all the adjoining states, carrying on intrigues

with their partizans, and urging on the enemies of the republic to acts of hostility against its government.

The power exercised by the Medici in Florence was not a recognized authority, attached to any very exalted office, such as that of President or Primate; but was an influence silently accorded and acquiesced in, arising from great wealth, aptitude for public affairs, a reputation for prudence, diplomatic skill, and a good knowledge of the circumstances and the designs of the principal Italian governments.

The Medici, from the time of Cosmo, had made a sophism of the Republic. They engrossed all the power of the state, without overtly arrogating to themselves official pre-eminence. Their apparent moderation caused their stealthy encroachments, gradually carried into effect, to attract little attention, till it was too late to resist a tyranny firmly established, but withal rendered less odious, or burdensome, or unbearable, to the citizens of Florence, than any previous despotism had been, by the perversion of state power to the ends of private interests.

The power which enabled a man of leading influence in Florence to carry the appointment of the magistracy, constituted that person virtually, though not nominally, the head of the Republic.

The Medici, in the fourteenth century, were simple citizens of Florence. They began at the close of it to obtain authority and distinction in the Republic, and to exert an influence in its affairs; "the result," says Tiraboschi, "of the riches they gained in commerce, and of their astuteness in making use of it."

The first authentic account of the employment of one of the Medici family in a high office of trust in the Republic, is that of Giovanni de Medici, in the year 1351, in a military command of importance.

In 1379, Salvestro de Medici, a partisan of the democratic party, exercised the authority of a chief magistrate of the Republic.

After his death, his son, Giovanni Veri (or Averardo) de

Medici, of the same principles as his father, filled offices of high rank in Florence.

Giovanni de Medici (son of Averardo), a merchant of great opulence, and endowed with that peculiar sagacity and prudence which distinguished so many of his descendants, filled the highest offices in the state.

Nardi observes, that John, by his excessive riches, and qualities which are apt to aggrandize a man, was exalted above the condition of civil equality, which was convenient in a republic, and many cavaliers and other grandees and citizens of repute were opposed to him. These, by the friends and partizans of the coterie of Medici—*amici e fautore della setta de Medici*—were called Uzanesi, and afterwards Rinaldeschi, from the names of the adverse cavaliers; while the partizans of the Medici in the time of Cosmo were called by the opposite faction Puccini, the name of two persons of bad repute, of great influence over Cosmo. John de Medici died in 1428, leaving two sons, Cosmo and Lorenzo, the former born in 1389.

"In 1434, the family of Medici," says Machiavelli, "in the persons of the descendants of Giovanni, began to acquire more influence and authority than any other republican magnates in Florence."*

"Cosmo and Lorenzo," says Tiraboschi, "the sons of John de Medici, were the first to have a great name in Florence, and to become leaders of the faction which then divided Florence. These persons became so formidable in 1433, that Cosmo, having rendered himself too much suspected, was by the machinations of his rivals shut up in prison, and was afterwards with others of his family exiled. But he managed to get himself recalled, and those of his family who were with him in exile, the year following to Florence, with the highest honour, and the universal applause of the citizens, as we learn from Poggio, the Florentine, in one of his letters to Cosmo himself. He continued at Florence to his death in 1464, having arrived, though one in a private station, to the high position of being the arbiter

* Historie Florentine, p. 6. Præmio Ed. 4to. *Roma*, 1550.

of the republic which he swayed by his genius. The prudence of his acts, but more especially the wealth of which he was wisely prodigal on fitting occasions, conciliated the esteem and affection of his own people, gained for him the respect and admiration of foreigners, and obtained for him also the glorious title of father of his country."*

Tiraboschi, in his gratitude to the memory of Cosmo, as a patron of learning, omits all mention of an act of perfidy of Cosmo, not surpassed by many acts of bad faith even in Italian history.

Cosmo had no sooner returned, than he made diligent enquiry into all particulars respecting those who had opposed his restoration. He learned that several of the most eminent citizens, during his exile, had used all the exertions in their power to prevent the Signoria from allowing him to return; had even taken up arms for the purpose of intimidating the Council, but had finally deposed them, and returned to pacific measures, by the interference of Pope Eugenius the Fourth, who was then in Florence, on being assured of pardon and exemption from all punishment by the government, and having that engagement guaranteed by the Pontiff. Cosmo made no account of the engagement whatsoever (two months after it was made); all these citizens, many of distinction, were banished and scattered over Italy.†

"In 1444," says Nardi, "Cosmo altered the constitution of the republic by reducing the number of those who had a voice in the election of persons for the dignity of the Signoria, and many persons were deprived of their offices, and imprisoned."‡ In 1458, the Medici made still further inroads on the constitution.

Biondo Flavello, a cotemporary of Cosmo's, in his "Italia Illustrata," speaks of him as a man "who surpassed the citizens of every part of Europe in wealth, prudence, humanity, and liberality; and whose intimate acquaintance with the arts and sciences, and especially with history, had rendered him celebrated and worthy of all praise."§

* Tiraboschi, Historia de Letteratura Italiana, tomo vi. part i. p. 11.
† Nardi, p. 9. ‡ Idem, p. 10.
§ Ital. Illustrata, p. 53. Ed. Taur. 1527, ap. Tiraboschi.

Several of the Italian historians make allusion to a report, that Pope John the Twenty-third, after his deposition, had invested in the bank of the Medici, in Florence, the immense riches which had been acquired during his Pontificate, and which, remaining there at the period of the death of the deposed Pontiff in 1419, had been appropriated by the Medici, and made the nucleus of their enormous wealth.

Roscoe refutes those reports, as malevolent fabrications, and states that John, at his decease, did not leave sufficient to pay his debts.*

Cosmo, having caused a collection of manuscripts of inestimable value to be made for him in the East, and of the most rare works that could be procured in every part of Italy, "had them deposited for public use in the Dominican convent of San Marco, at Florence, which he had himself erected at an enormous expense in 1437. This collection was the foundation of another celebrated library in Florence, known by the name of the Bibliotheca Mariana, which is yet open to the inspection of the learned, at the distance of three centuries."

Cosmo committed the arrangement of the library of San Marco to one Tommaso Calandrino, the son of a poor physician of Lazano, an obscure young man in the lower order of the clergy, who had an excellent taste, however, for literature, and a good knowledge of works of learning. Tommaso Calandrino, in course of time a Pontiff of the Holy See, Nicholas the Fifth, of glorious memory, for his patronage of learning, having enlarged the scanty library of his predecessors, and planned the establishment of one in Rome, worthy of the Eternal City, "may be considered the founder of the library of the Vatican," we are told by Roscoe.†

The library of S. Marco owed its chief riches to the passion that began to prevail all over Italy, after the downfall of the Roman empire in the East, in 1452, for collecting the works of the ancients, that had been rescued from destruction by the eminent prelates and scholars of Constantinople, who had found

* Life of Lorenzo, p. 54. † Idem, p. 68.

a refuge in Italy. But long previously, the library of St. Mark's had the collection of valuable manuscripts, which had belonged to Nicolo Nicoli, secured for it and for the public use by Cosmo. The intercourse which he maintained with the East, had enabled him, more than all the other Italian magnates of his time, to turn the destruction of Constantinople to the account of Italian enlightenment and civilization. Cosmo's successor made important additions to the literary treasures of St. Mark's, and Lorenzo surpassed both his predecessors, in his munificent donations to this collection.

Cosmo, the "Padre delle Patria," was the first of the Medici to arrogate to himself the dignity of the chief of the Republic—"Primato della Republica." Many records of his magnificence* and munificence have been left by cotemporary historians and philosophers. Cosmo was an enthusiastic admirer of the philosophy of Plato; he established schools for the study of it; he caused many eminent scholars, celebrated for their proficiency in it, to establish themselves in Florence—Marsilius Ficinus, Francesco Filelfo, and other distinguished scholars. Cosmo transmitted his Platonic tastes to his son Pietro, the latter to his son Lorenzo, and Lorenzo to his son John, the juvenile cardinal, who, on his elevation to the Papal throne, took the name of Leo the Tenth. Florence had soon its academy, where Platonic eloquence flourished under the protection of the munificent Cosmo; and there, we are told, "the sublime mysteries of the Platonic philosophy," "sublimi misterii della filosofia Platonica," were reasoned on by Cosmo, with a wisdom "perfettamente Platonica."

Ficinus, in one of his letters, says, "he owed much to Plato, but more to Cosmo, who represented in his own person the virtues which the philosopher had traced the idea of, in his works." And Ficinus adds, "he (Cosmo) was as subtle in disputing as he was wise in his governing." In fact, the Greek scholars, who had found a refuge in Florence, on the downfall of the Latin Empire in the East, had inspired Cosmo with an

* Tiraboschi, tomo vi. part i. p. 33.

admiration bordering on idolatry for the philosophy of Plato. And those sublime mysteries of the Platonic philosophy in Florence superseded those of Christianity, which were believed in by the vulgar and unlettered in other countries.

Florence, in fact, was heathenised by the Medici, the Pagan philosophy was preferred to that of the Gospel, and was made the rule of life for the scholars and the sages of this new Athens of intellectual refinement.

Cosmo de Medici, the Platonic Philosopher, left ample work to be done by the Christian Monk, Girolamo Savonarola, in the time of his grandson Lorenzo.

Of the banking operations of the Medici, we have an example in the time of Cosmo, of the extent in which they were carried on.

During the contests between the houses of York and Lancaster, "Edward the Fourth resorted to one of Cosmo's agents in England for a loan, to such an extraordinary amount, that it might be almost considered the means of supporting that monarch on the throne."*

The Medici were not only bankers and merchants, but extensive farmers and miners. They carried on an extensive trade with Egypt, via Alexandria.

Machiavelli, in the eighth book of his history, speaking of Cosmo as one of the wisest and gravest men of Italy of his time, observes: "He would now and then play the most egregious fool in his carriage, and was so much given to jesters, players, and childish sports, to make himself merry, that he that should but consider his gravity on the one part, his folly and lightness on the other, would surely say, there were two distinct persons in him."

Burton, moralising on this tendency of great men to be gamblesome, whose efforts to be lively somewhat resemble the exertions of an ungainly camel to be frisky of an evening, when the burden which it bore is taken off, and the process of unpacking is concluded, says: "Now methinks, though Salisburiensis be of opinion that magistrates, senators, and grave

* Life of Lorenzo, by Roscoe, p. 78.

men should not descend to lighter sports, *ne respublica ludere videater*, but, as Themistocles, keep a stern and constant courage.

"I commend Cosmus de Medicis, and Castrucius Castrucanus, than whom Italy never knew a worthier captain, another Alexander, if Machiavel do not deceive us in his life; when a friend of his reprehended him for dancing, as beside his dignity (belike at some cushen dance), he told him again, *qui sapit interdiu vix unquam noctu dessipit;* he that is wise in the day, may dote a little in the night. Paulus Jovius relates as much of Pope Leo Decimus, that he was a grave, discreet, stay'd man, yet sometimes most free, and too open in his sports. And 'tis not altogether unfit or mis-beseeming the gravity of such a man, if that *decorum* of time, place, and such circumstances, be observed. *Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem.*"

Pietro, the son of Cosmo, succeeded to his father's wealth and dignities in 1464, with the additional title of Gonfalionere. Bandini states that he delighted much in the maxims and mysteries of the Platonic philosophy. While he was yet a youth, in 1441, he took a leading part in getting up a literary tournament, *combattimenti letterario*, unique in its kind, in which the subject of "True Friendship" was to be disputed, in poetry of whatsoever kind of verse the disputants might choose to adopt. The mimic war of wit came off in the church of Santa Maria, on a Sunday, before duly appointed judges. A crown of silver, in the fashion of a laurel garland, was to be awarded to the victorious disputant, but the judges were unable to decide on the merits of so many claims of equal excellence. Pietro's title to celebrity is limited to the origin of this *combattimenti letterario*, and another origin of more importance, that of Lorenzo de Medici.

The career of Pietro was short; he died in 1469, leaving two sons, Julian and Lorenzo, the latter of whom elevated himself to the highest eminence, political and social.

Lorenzo, on his accession to the dignities, wealth, and high station enjoyed by his father, seems to have set out from the commencement of his career by regarding himself as the state.

His acts spoke intelligibly this purpose to the people of Florence: "Errare cives si tum, senatum aliquid in Republica posse arbitrebantur."*

Lorenzo was no exception to the general rule of persons of intellectual powers being chiefly indebted to their mothers for those remarkable qualities which render men renowned, whether as scholars, sages, philosophers, artists, or patrons of learning and of arts, or adepts in those pursuits.

Lorenzo's mother "was one of the most accomplished women of the age, and distinguished not only as a patroness of learning, but by her own writings."†

She transmitted her accomplishments and tastes, "en vraie mere," to her favourite son Lorenzo.

The Volterra atrocities, at an early period of Lorenzo's public career, consequent on his unjust and cruel measures, constitute the great blot on his character; one which all the efforts of Roscoe to efface, have not been successful in accomplishing.

In 1475, after the return of Lorenzo to Florence from Rome, where he had been on an embassy to congratulate Sixtus the Fourth on his elevation, a dispute arose between the Florentine Republic and Volterra, which city composed part of its dominions, on a subject which nearly concerned the commercial interests of the house of Medici.

That house was largely engaged in money transactions in several parts of Tuscany. They held mines of lead, silver, alum, and nitre, on leases from the landed proprietors, on whose estates those mines were situated from the time of Cosmo. Whenever they had serious contentions with such proprietors, or with other states on the subject of transit imposts or dues of entry or exit, they used the powers of the Republic, which, in fact, in their hands had become a mere family *apanage*, for the promotion of their commerce and interests, and ambitious objects.

A mine of alum had been discovered in the district of Vol-

* Cicero, Orat. pro Sent. † Life of Lorenzo, by Roscoe, p. 81.

terra, which had remained in the rightful possession of the proprietors of the soil, from the time of its discovery to the period of Lorenzo's return from Rome. By these proprietors some monies had been raised in Florence from certain merchants, and shares in the property had been given to them. The municipal authorities of Volterra, finding the mine had become profitable, had claimed a part of the profits for municipal revenue.

This proceeding, however, was neither in accordance with, or by the express instructions of, the supreme government of the Republic in Florence; for when it was appealed to by the proprietors against the Volterra municipality, the Republic decided against the latter, on the ground that the profits in question ought not to be applied to local public purposes, but should be devoted to the general revenue of the government of the Republic in Florence.

The monstrous injustice of the decision enraged the citizens of Volterra. Indignation, fruitless expostulations, commotions and tumults, terminated in open resistance to the Republic, and a determination to separate their territory from its tyranny. The Florentine commissary had to fly from Volterra to save his life. The people of Volterra had already made four previous unsuccessful attempts at revolution.

The Florentine government was alarmed and disconcerted by this event.

Some of the lords of the council and superior magistrates, and especially Tomaso Soderini, were strongly in favour of conciliatory measures. But these were as strongly opposed by Lorenzo de Medici, says Machiavelli, "thinking this a fair opportunity to demonstrate his wisdom and his prudence (by a contrary opinion); and being more influenced in thus advising, because he was encouraged by those who were inimical to Soderini, declared in favour of an armed expedition to punish the arrogance of the Volterani; and he affirmed, that if that city was not punished, and made a memorable example of,—'en essempio memorabile coretti,' other people (dependent on the Republic),

having no longer any reverence for its authority, from fear of similar circumstances, would, on the slightest pretence, do as the people of Volterra had done in their territory."*

So by Machiavelli's account, apparently truthful, Lorenzo, in causing war to be made on the people of Volterra, was mainly influenced by motives of paltry jealousy of one of the most illustrious, wise, and virtuous citizens of Florence, and only *then* inferior to himself in power and influence in the Republic. So great was his influence, that on the death of the father of Lorenzo, many of the most distinguished citizens of the Republic urged him, though ineffectually, to take the first place in the Republic, to the exclusion of the Medici.

Lorenzo having succeeded in carrying his views into execution, the territory of the people of Volterra was attacked by a Florentine army of 12,000 men, under the command of the Lord of Urbino. The unfortunate territory was easily ravaged by this great army. The city surrendered at discretion, after a short resistance, and the destruction of the city and inhabitants ensued. Machiavelli, with his usual coolness, relates the atrocities of the Florentine army in these terms:—"The city for a whole day was pillaged and ravaged by the soldiers, neither women, nor children, nor churches, nor any place, being exempt from the rapacity both of their enemies and their mercenaries. The news of the victory was received in Florence with extraordinary joy, *and being Lorenzo's own enterprize*, it turned highly to the advantage of his reputation."

Further we are told by Machiavelli:—"One of his own most intimate friends upbraided Thomas Soderino for his advice against the expedition,—saying, 'What think you now of it, that Volterra is won?' to whom Tomaso replied—'I rather think Volterra is lost, for had you entered into terms with it, that city might have proved in time of need serviceable to the Republic, and have contributed towards the security of the city; but treated as it has been, and retained by force of arms, it will be

* Machiavelli, Historie Florentine, lib. vii. p. 197.

a trouble and a weakness to you in time of war, and an expense to you in time of peace.' "*

Roscoe informs us, the destruction brought on Volterra by this war—*Lorenzo's own expedition*—was an accident. It was not intended, forsooth, the captured city should have been ravaged, the women defiled, and many citizens massacred in cold blood.

And he states, that "Lorenzo was no sooner apprised of this event, than he hastened to Volterra, where he endeavoured to repair the injuries done to the inhabitants, and to alleviate their distresses by every method in his power."†

Raffaelle da Volterra, a contemporary historian, and a native of the ravaged city (In Comment. Urban Geogr. 138), considers Lorenzo as the author of those calamities, and deals with him accordingly.

In plain terms, "Lorenzo's own expedition," against the people of Volterra, was carried on at the charge, and with the troops of the Republic, for the protection of the monopoly of an article of commerce, the value of which was likely to be depreciated by the discovery of a mine in Volterra, producing the same commodity, which had begun to be productive, by means of capital furnished by Florentine merchants, competitors in trade with Lorenzo. And thus, for the promotion of his own selfish object, he exposed the people of a whole city to the horrors of war, and the danger of having an infuriated soldiery let loose on their property, their wives, children, and places of worship.

"*The mines of alum*," says Roscoe, "in different parts of Italy, were either the property of the Medici family, or were hired by them from their respective owners, *so that they were enabled almost to monopolize* this article, and to render it highly lucrative. For a mine in the Roman territory, it appears that they paid to the Papal See the annual rent of 100,000 florins."‡

In the Pontificate of Sixtus the Fourth, a murderous con-

* Machiavelli, Historie Florentine, lib. xii. p. 298.

† Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo de Medici, p. 125. ‡ Idem. p. 117.

spiracy against the Medici was entered into, it is asserted by the organs of the latter, with the express sanction of the Pontiff; but with what truth that assertion is made, remains to be discovered.

In 1471, Sixtus the Fourth succeeded Paul the Second. Onofrio Panvinio, in his continuation of Platina's Vite de Pontifici, speaks of the dissensions between the Pope and Lorenzo de Medici, occasioned by the unbounded cupidity of this Pontiff, "immensa e sfrenata cupidita del Papa."* But some other and better reasons might be given for these dissensions, more prejudicial to the character of the Medici, and less injurious to that of the Pope. These dissensions, however, in the opinion of Panvinio, ultimately led to the ruin of the Medici. Sixtus the Fourth died in 1484; Machiavelli (Hist. Flor. lib. viii.) states, "either poisoned or of grief, at the intelligence of the recently-proclaimed peace, of which he was an enemy."†

Roscoe, in his Life of Lorenzo de Medici, speaks of the character of Sixtus the Fourth in strong terms of reprobation. But it is possible we should have heard less of the depravity imputed to him, if he had been less inimical to Lorenzo de Medici and his brother. His vast expenditure for architectural improvements in Rome, occasioned the imposition of heavy taxes on ecclesiastics holding high offices in the Church or the Court, and led to embarrassments, which turned away attention from many grievous evils and abuses of his time, that greatly needed to be reformed.

Ranke states, that Sixtus the Fourth was the first Pope by whom the project was undertaken, with a fixed will, and effectual results, to establish a sovereignty for himself in those dominions which were regarded as the patrimony of the Church, but which were now under the dominion of various chiefs. This project, he adds, was most strenuously and most successfully followed by Alexander the Sixth; and from Julius the

* Platina, in Vit. Paolo, p. 448.
† Life of Lorenzo de Medici, p. 219.

Second this plan received a direction wholly unexpected, and of which the effect was permanent.

"Sixtus the Fourth (1471—1484) conceived the idea of founding a principality for his nephew, Girolamo Riario, in the fertile and beautiful plains of Romagna."*

"If the question had been one of right," continues Ranke, "the Pope had manifestly a better title than any one of those princes; but he was greatly their inferior in political force, and the materials of war. He did not scruple to employ his spiritual influence—exalted by its nature and its influence above all earthly purposes—for the furtherance of his worldly interests. Nor did he shrink from debasing it by contact with the temporary intrigues in which these involved him."†

The famous conspiracy of Francis Pazzi against the Medici, in which Julian lost his life in 1478, and his brother Lorenzo was slightly wounded, having been defeated, Lorenzo adroitly turned the attempt to his advantage, and to the complete ruin of his principal competitors, both commercial and political.

The Pazzi had carried on a rival banking establishment in Rome, where Lorenzo also had one. They were considered by the people as firmly attached to the Republic, and faithful to its interests.

They were popular with the Democratic party; the Medici, on the other hand, were looked upon with distrust by that party, as having designs to promote their own interests, rather than those of the Republic; in fact, to elevate themselves above it. They were merchant princes, in every sense of the term—making use of the state for the benefit of their bank, and using their bank for the promotion of their designs against the Republic.

It is not in the Life of Lorenzo de Medici, by Roscoe, however admirably written, that we must look for proof of any statements which militate against the character of Lorenzo in any period of his career. Nevertheless, in the earlier part of that career,

* Ranke's History of the Popes, ch. ii. p. 34.

† Idem, pp. 33, 34.

there was most assuredly much to reduce hero-worship, in the case of the homage so extensively offered to his wealth, prudence, and prosperity, within moderate and reasonable limits.

If the crime of the Pazzi was atrocious, the crimes of the adherents of the Medici were not less so. No sooner had the conspiracy exploded, and failed in its main object, than the streets were polluted with the dead bodies of their victims, by the adherents of the Medici. "Giacobo Poggio was hanged from a window of the palace. The followers (of the Pazzi) were either slaughtered in the palace, or thrown half alive through the windows." The young Cardinal Riario, who was seized at the altar, where he had taken refuge, was only preserved from death by the interference of Lorenzo, "who appeared to give credit to his asseverations, that he was ignorant of the intentions of the conspirators."

It would have been well if Lorenzo had then said to his adherents—"transeat in exemplo." "Francesco Pazzi was dragged out of his uncle's house naked, and hanged from the palace windows. This punishment was immediately followed by that of the Archbishop of Pisa, Salviati, who was hung through a window of the palace, and was not allowed even to divest himself of his prelatical robes."*

When Lorenzo effectually interfered to put a stop to the putting to death of persons suspected of taking part in this conspiracy, "upwards of one hundred persons had already perished," says Roscoe, "some by the hands of justice, and others by the fury of the citizens."†

But throughout the whole "of this just but dreadful retribution," we are told, "Lorenzo had exerted all his influence to restrain the indignation of the populace and restrain the shedding of blood."

It is difficult to conceive that his influence was so small as Roscoe represents it.

But if "the retribution" on upwards of one hundred people

* Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo, p. 146. † Ibid. p. 154.

savagely slaughtered "was just," his interference might hardly be expected.

The adherents of Lorenzo, the literati of his time, and the latest of his biographers, implicate a pope, a cardinal, an archbishop, and some priests in the attempted crime of the assassination of the Medici. They state that Sixtus the Fourth, then Pontiff, having two nephews (or, as Machiavelli asserts, sons), named Riario, had provided for one of them by making him a cardinal, and was desirous of aggrandizing the other, Girolamo Riario, with the territories of the Lords of Imola and of Forli.

The Medici opposed this design, and came to the aid of those Lords of Imola and of Forli, with money and their counsel. The court of Rome took umbrage at those acts of the Medici, and determined on the extermination of the family. A Florentine banker of the name of Pazzi, an enemy of the Medici, proposed their assassination to the Pope, and his holiness approved of the act. *Therefore, to carry it into execution, the Cardinal Riario was despatched to Florence to direct the conspiracy,* and Salviati, Archbishop of Florence, was charged with the arrangement of all the details of the projected murders. Two priests were specially appointed to dispatch the brothers, and a solemn festival was chosen for the execution of the plans, in the church of the Reparata, at the feast of Saint Stephen; and the cathedral of Milan had been chosen not long before for the assassination of Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, who fell at the foot of the altar by the hands of similar assassins.

The whole of this statement rests on mere assertion, with the exception of the facts of a conspiracy having existed for the overthrow of the Medici, and the murder of Julian and Lorenzo, the concoctors of which were members of the Pazzi family—of its having been attempted to be executed in the church of the Reparata, on the occasion of a festival, and of a priest named Stefana having endeavoured to murder Lorenzo at the same time that his brother was assassinated.

The idea of a Pope sending a Cardinal to the capital of another state to direct the execution of a number of murders, is

somewhat novel. It was a hazardous mission for a Cardinal to be sent on. But what are we to think of the care of the Pope for a nephew or a son, whose extreme affection for his relations, we are told, had led him to contemplate very extraordinary measures to promote their interests? Is it likely that Pontiff would expose one of those relations so dear to him to the very imminent danger of a discovery or failure of the conspiracy? Would the Pope have no care for the character of the Church, and make choice of one of the cardinals of his court to direct a murderous plot, which any layman might have managed with less danger of attracting attention?

Sixtus the Fourth, being the enemy of Lorenzo, has met with very scanty justice at the hands of Roscoe. The conspiracy to murder the Medici, on the 26th of April, 1478, in the church of the Reparata, he says, was conducted by the Pope and his nephew, the young Cardinal Riario*—"They were the real instigators of it," he asserts, and "Salviati, the Archbishop, was the principal agent."

For proof of these assertions, we are given the fact of a convocation held in the church of the Reparata, summoned by Urbino, bishop of Arrezzo, and a document the result of the deliberations which took place there—the professed object of which was to criminate the Pope as being the chief instigator of the murderous conspiracy; but "the extreme violence of the language used by the Synod against the Pontiff," and "the copious torrent of abuse" poured out by the Synod on the head of their Church, Roscoe admits, exceeded all limits of decorum.

We are told that the government of Florence had directed their chancellor, Bartholomew Scala, to draw up an historical memorial of all the proceedings of the conspiracy;—"By which," says Roscoe, "it clearly appeared that throughout the whole transaction, the conspirators acted with the privity and assent of the Pope."†

This lengthy memorial is given in the Appendix of the Life of Lorenzo, but not a single valid proof is given of the Pope,

* Life of Lorenzo, p. 141. † Ibid. p. 157.

Cardinal, or Archbishop, having participated in the crime of the projected murders of Lorenzo and Julian de Medici, and the actual assassination of the latter. The evidence of tortured witnesses, and the confessions put in the mouths of terrified wretches condemned to death, are the foundation of this charge against the Pontiff, the Cardinal, and Archbishop.* But Lorenzo was not always at war with the Holy See.

Machiavelli tells us that "the Pope (Innocent the Eighth) had a son named Francis, and desiring much to procure for him state honours, and an advantageous alliance, in order that after his death he might be maintained, he did not know in Italy a more secure alliance for him than with the family of the Medici, and so he managed with Lorenzo, that the daughter of the latter was given in marriage to his son Francis."†

The alliance of the Pontiff's son with the noble house of the Medici led to political alliances, conjoined influences, and events of great importance—to the maintenance and origin of wars, suspended during the latter years of Lorenzo, but which terminated ultimately in the downfall of most of its republics.

Machiavelli, in his encomiums on the pattern of a prudent and fortunate Prince, Lorenzo de Medici, expatiates on the successes of Lorenzo, on all the prosperous undertakings of his life, and, amongst the rest, the elevation of his second son, Giovanni, a boy not yet thirteen years of age (the embryo Pontiff Leo the Tenth), to the dignity of a Cardinal, which great honour the Florentine historian tells us, "fu tanto piu notabile quanto fuora d'ogni passato esempio che non havendo ancora XIII anni, fu a tanto grado condotto. Il che fu una scala da poter fare salire la sua casa in cielo come poi ne i tempi seguenti intervenne."‡

This accomplishment of Lorenzo's great ambition for the elevation of a boy of thirteen years of age to the dignity of a

* We read in Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo (p. 322), that, "two days before his death, the great dome of the Reparata was struck with lightning, and on the side which approaches towards the chapel of the Medici, a part of the building fell."

† Hist. Flor. lib. viii. p. 345.

‡ Ibid. p. 349.

Cardinal, was one of the happy events, on account of which it was judged by Machiavelli, that Lorenzo lived in the greatest felicity, "in una felicita grandissima," to the end of his days, in 1492, when he died, at the age of forty-four years.

This most wise and fortunate of the Medici, Machiavelli's model Prince, Roscoe's "Lorenzo the Magnificent," who derived his religion from Plato, deemed it a master-stroke of policy to marry his daughter to the son of a Pontiff, and made the degradation of one of the highest dignitaries of the Church, the acquisition of a Cardinal's hat for a boy under thirteen—"a ladder to enable his house to mount to heaven, as it came to pass in after-times," as we are told by Machiavelli, with all the cool complacency of his peculiarly complimentary sarcasm.

All these things must be borne in mind by those who would read the life of Savonarola, and understand his labours.

We learn also from the Storie Florentino de Segni (ed. fol. Augusta, 1723), that Julian de Medici, the brother of Lorenzo, who was murdered by the Pazzi, in 1478, left a natural son, whom the interest of the family was powerful enough to place in the chair of St. Peter, under the name of Clement the Seventh.

Lorenzo's relations with the Holy See became so intimate, as to privilege him to advise the Holy See in matters of great delicacy.

Ranke refers to an attempt of Lorenzo de Medici to cause a Pontiff to abuse his office, and turn the advantages it afforded him to the account of his private interests. He quotes a passage from a letter of Lorenzo's, without date, but apparently of the year 1489, addressed to Pope Innocent the Eighth, in the following terms—"Others have not so long postponed their efforts to attain the Papal chair, and have concerned themselves little to maintain the retiring delicacy so long evinced by your Holiness. Now is your Holiness not only exonerated before God and man, but this honourable conduct may cause you to incur blame, and your reserve may be attributed to less worthy motives. Zeal and duty lay it on my conscience to remind

your Holiness that no man is immortal. Be the Pontiff as important as he may in his own person, he cannot make his dignity and that importance hereditary; he cannot be said absolutely to possess any thing, but the honours and emoluments he had secured to his kindred."*

The facts of the case are told in a few words: Lorenzo de Medici had a daughter married to a son of the Pope; and in his anxiety for the interest of his son-in-law, he set about removing all scruples of the Pontiff in regard to Simoniacal practices, and delicately points out the moral obligation, he endeavours to persuade his Holiness that he was under, to turn his sacred office to the account of his private interests.

Lorenzo patronized art and architecture, he enriched artists and architects, he embellished his capital, but he did little to establish liberty, or to secure the independence of the Republic.

His liberality, however, to artists and scholars, covered a multitude of sins against the state,—as such liberality always does. Lorenzo was incensed by all the worshippers of wealth and power of his time; the literati, the artists, the men of science, all who had patronage to expect, and eulogy to give for it, swung their censers in the air before the face of the magnificent Lorenzo, the god of the idolatry of the Poggios, the Poliziano, and other literati of the time.

There are no eulogies in Florentine history, ancient or modern, on Lorenzo de Medici, as a patron of learning and of art, undeserved. "He was the Augustus of his city, and the Mæcenas of its scholars," in the words of Corsi. Florence under his guidance became a new Athens. In the words of Ermolao Barbaro, "Letters were much indebted to the Florentines, and amongst them, singularly so to the Medici, and amongst the Medici were particularly obliged to Lorenzo.—Molto doveano le lettere à Florentini ma tra questi singolarmente à Medici, è fra i Medici piu che ad ogni altri à Lorenzo."

Lorenzo the Magnificent not only patronized "en Prince," art and letters, and artists, and learned men, but he cultivated

* Fabroni, Vita Laurentii, vol. i. p. 390. Ap. Ranke, vol. ii. p. 33.

literature himself with great success. He was an excellent poet, well skilled in music, was an accomplished scholar, a writer possessing great facility in expressing his thoughts precisely and perspicuously, a philosopher of the school of Plato, and somewhat more of a Platonist than a lover of the philosophy of the man of Tarsis, or a disciple of Him whose doctrines were transmitted to the Apostles, and by them committed to the custody of the Church.

Lorenzo looked on religion as an adjunct to the civil power, to be maintained in pomp for political purposes. The Church, in his estimation, was deserving of protection, so long as its rulers were in alliance with the Medici, and disposed to promote their interests.

Of the maxims of Æneas Sylvius, the subsequent Pontiff, Pius the Second, there are many which deserve to be held in remembrance, and that are applicable to all men, in all times and all circumstances. But there is one that it would have been well for Lorenzo de Medici in particular, if he had borne it in mind for his guidance and government:

"Every citizen should consider his house of less importance than the city; the city than the state, the state than the world, and the whole world than the kingdom of Heaven."

There is another truism likewise of Æneas Sylvius, that might have been remembered with advantage by Lorenzo:

"Though Christianity were not attested by miracles, it should be believed by all nations, for its intrinsic worth, its confirmed moral excellencies."

Lorenzo, not long before his death, we are told by Nardi, made an important change in the fundamental law of the Republic, creating a Council of Seventy, and giving to it very full authority to transact all the business which had been heretofore done by the several administrative, deliberative, and legislative councils. "Of the old councils of the Republic, nothing now remained but the shadow and the name.

"And thus," says Nardi, "by a successful issue to all things

undertaken by him, Lorenzo attained such greatness, that he became little less than *a legitimate and absolute sovereign.*"*

It matters not to literature what solemn engagements entered into by a Prince may be broken; it is of no importance how much perfidy has been practised, to undermine by stealth a long-established form of government, or overturn a constitution by open violence; how much sophistry is employed to give a plausible appearance of adherence to principles, while it passes over manifest perversions of them in practice; how much injury is done to public morality by those highway robberies of a people's rights, by ambitious felons in high places. All that literature feels called on to inquire about the rulers of the earth is, How are they affected towards learning? Do they patronize it? Have they done so long, and liberally?

It is marvellous to see Italy, in the fifteenth century, though still torn by domestic factions, and ravaged by external enemies, beginning to encourage learning in its principal states and cities simultaneously, each republic and sovereignty emulous of its neighbour; all apparently moved by one common instinct, an impulsive energy directed to the revival of arts and letters, the acquisition of liberty, the removal of the defences of feudalism from various barbarisms in society, and from the organized rapacity of despotic governments administered by military chiefs.

The fifteenth century, for Italy, was productive of more important events, and of greater men, than history furnishes an account of in any preceding age, and perhaps it might be said in any subsequent one. To their influences are to be traced the grandest discoveries, the greatest stimulants to mental energy and revolutions in opinion, that have elevated all European countries, advanced the progress of civilization in them, and affected the constitution of states and churches.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of the results of the downfall of the Roman Empire in the East; the transfer to Italian libraries of the riches of ancient learning, saved from the wreck of civilization in that Christian Empire,

* Nardi, p. 12.

and the asylum afforded in the principal Italian States, and pre-eminently in Florence by the Medici, to the distinguished scholars of Constantinople, who had fled their ruined country; the invention of printing; the encouragement of arts and letters in the several courts of Italy; the concourse of scholars, poets, philosophers, painters, sculptors, and men of mind, of all peaceful and humanizing pursuits, in the courts of Rome, Florence, Milan, Pisa, and Ferrara.

We find, in the fifteenth century, the sure signs of a great social and intellectual revolution manifesting themselves, in the contact of men of mind with the men of force, of the poets and philosophers with the feudal lords, the soldier barons with the chiefs of all factions, who were indebted to the sword for their possessions and position; in the triumph of civilizing art and literature, of religion, in spite of all impediments to its true power, over the brutalizing soldier-sway of feudal institutions; in the recent restoration of the Church to the old capital of the Christian world, in its strength to cope with the violence and rapacity of feudal chiefs and princes. The transition, however, from feudalism to civilization, was a state of society in which grossness of manners, and corruption in Church and State, had rather changed external appearances than real character. The rays of the sun of science and learning, which shone on the surface of society, had not reached the depths of it, nor penetrated far into the interior of Italian life, or into court or castles.

A man familiar with Italian history may well bless his stars that his lot was not cast in the fifteenth century; in that *Borgian Era*, when incarnate fiends seemed to have been let loose on humanity, and on the Church, for its sore trial and retribution.

From that trial, though the Church came forth unhurt in doctrine, not unscathed did she come forth in character; and most grievously did humanity suffer in the contest, at the close of that century, between the powers of light and darkness, in which it pleased God that some of the best men should be

beaten down, and the worst men should have a triumph, and a temporary advantage.

It was the destiny of Savonarola, in the prime of life, and the full vigour of his noble intellect, to be thrown into the arena of contention in that Borgian era of Pagan iniquity arrayed in Christian vesture, and to have to fight the wild beasts of Ephesian wickedness in defence of truth and religion, with those oppressors who professed to protect their interests, and it was his fortune to perish in that unequal struggle.

The state to which religion was reduced, and the uses to which the power and influence of the Court of Rome were perverted at the close of the fifteenth century, when Roderigo Lenzuole and Borgia, with all the infamy of his early career, a matter of public notoriety, found it possible to practice simony and corruption, with such success as to ensure his election and elevation to the throne of the Christian world, in a conclave composed of twenty-three cardinals, can only be ascertained and comprehended by a close examination of the relations between Church and State in that interval to which I have referred.

Platina's continuator of the "Vite Pontefici"—Panvinio, in reference to the election of Alexander the Sixth, says, "The ambition and avarice of some Cardinals left them to be suborned." .... The subornation he designates "this infamous and mercenary work."...."The foremost of these (Cardinals), Ascanio Sforza, was suborned," he says, "without any doubt by means of a great reward."*

Guicciardini, Corio, Denina, Tiraboschi, Nardi, and several others, assert the fact of the venality of the Cardinal, and the simony and corruption practised by the Pope on this occasion.

The state of religion in the fifteenth century, was such as the influences on it of the relations between Church and State, from the age of Constantine to the pontificate of Alexander the Sixth, might have been expected to produce.

* "L'ambitione è l'avaritia d'alcuni Cardinali si lasciarono subornare... Questo scelerato è mercenaria opera....Il primo di loro, fu Ascanio Sforza subornata senza algun dubbio da un grosso premio."—*Panvinio, in Vite Alex.*

These subjects will be found entered into at some length elsewhere. It is only essential to the main subject of my work that the fact should be distinctly stated at the very threshold of this account of the life and labours of one, whose continual cry was against the scandals and abuses that prevailed in his time in the Court of Rome, and the government of religion, that the Church of God was not what it had been in primitive times; that wealth, and power, and worldly grandeur, and the cares of territorial possessions and of civil government, had brought great calamities upon it; that luxury and rapacity prevailed at that period, and long anterior to it had prevailed in the Court of Rome and its sacred colleges, and that spirituality was banished from its Councils and its Churches. The dignitaries of the Church had long ceased to live after the manner of the prelates and pastors of apostolic times. The negligence of the clergy, and the secular spirit that had crept into religion, had made practical infidels of professing Christians.

The connexion with the State had poisoned the pure atmosphere of truth. Everything in ecclesiastical government was contaminated by it. The few exceptions to the general rule, I fear it must be admitted, do not materially affect these observations. Savonarola most assuredly was not mistaken when he affirmed that ecclesiastical government greatly needed a reform, and that many of the religious orders required to be brought back to the intentions of their founders—to a new sense of the piety, self-denial, humility, and poverty, which early characterized them, and to make the Church of God what it was in the ages of faith, and freedom from the cares of territorial wealth and government.

"Who shall grant me," cried St. Bernard, "to see the Church of God such as she was in primitive times?"

Bernard saw not that glorious restoration of religion, and return to the ancient piety and poverty of the faithful.

Savonarola, too, pined for the same blessed consummation, and he, too, died without beholding it.

But St. Bernard could address language of reprehension to

the supreme heads of the Church of his times with impunity, which at a later period would have brought anathemas on the heads of those daring to make use of it. After the council of Pisa had put an end to the schism and the conflicting claims of the two candidates for the Pontifical throne, Bernard learned that the Pope Innocent the Second had not fulfilled a promise he had made him, to restore the Cardinal Pietro of Pisa to his former dignities, from which he had been removed on account of his adherence to the other candidate for the chair of Peter; he accordingly wrote to the Pontiff, "Who shall execute judgment on yourself? If there were any judges before whom I could cite you, I would not fail to shew you what treatment you have deserved at my hands. I know that there is the tribunal of Jesus Christ; but God forbid that I should accuse you before that tribunal, where, on the contrary, I would it were in my power to defend you. It is for this cause that I apply to him, who has received commission to render justice to all men. I appeal from you to yourself."*

Jacopone, a writer of celebrity of spiritual poetry, and an eminently holy man, a member of the order of St. Francis, about 1278, made the calamities of the Church the subject of a dolorous canticle, beginning with the words:—

"Piange la chiesa: piange e dolora."†

And others before them prayed, and preached, and laboured to bring back ecclesiastical affairs to their old condition. The charter of King Edgar "to the monastery of the Holy Mother of God, at Glastonbury," recites: "Though the decrees of Pontiffs are fixed like the foundations of the mountains, yet, nevertheless, through the storms and tempests of secular affairs, and the corruption of reprobate men, the institutions of the Church of God are often corrupted and broken."

In the eighteenth session of the Council of Constance (18th August, 1415), a Carmelite friar, professor of theology, in Montpellier, named Bertrand Vacher, pronounced a discourse,

* Neander's Life of St. Bernard, p. 113.

† Tiraboschi, tom. v. parte ii. lib. iii.

urging on the Council the imperative necessity of a prompt and efficacious reform of abuses in the Church, and, above all, "to put a stop to the insatiable avarice, indomitable ambition, gross ignorance, scandalous indolence, and execrable worldliness of ecclesiastics."*

"From the period of the Council of Vienna," says Bossuet, "a great prelate charged by the Pope with the preparation of the matters which ought to be treated of there, laid it down as the basis of the work of that holy assembly, that *it was essential to reform the Church in its chief and in its members.*".... At the Council of Basle, we are told, the Cardinal Julien represented to Pope Eugenius the Fourth the disorders of the clergy, especially those of Germany, as matters for the gravest consideration. "Those disorders," said he, "excite the hatred of the people against the whole ecclesiastical order; and if they are not corrected, care is to be taken that the laity do not fall on the clergy in the manner of the Hussites, as they loudly menace us." He predicted, "that if the clergy of Germany were not promptly reformed, that when the Bohemian heresy should have been smothered, another would arise still more dangerous; for the clergy," said he, "it will be affirmed, are incorrigible, and have no wish that a remedy should be applied to their disorders, &c.....The little of respect left for the sacred office of the priesthood will end in being lost. The whole blame of those disorders will be cast on the Court of Rome, which will be regarded as the cause of all existing evils.....I see," continued he, "that the axe is laid to the root; the tree bends, and, instead of supporting it whilst it could be done, we help to cast it down.....God has taken away the perception of our perils, as He is accustomed to do with those whom He intends to punish. The flames are kindled before us, and we run on till we rush into the midst of them."†

"It is thus," says Bossuet,‡ "in the fifteenth age, the greatest man of his age deplored the evils, and foresaw the sad conse-

* L'Enfant, Hist. du Concile de Const. tome i. liv. iv. p. 452.

† Histoire des Variations, vol. i. liv. 1, p. 2. ‡ Ibid. p. 4.

quences of them, and seemed to predict those which Luther was about to bring on the Christian world, commencing with Germany; and he was not deceived when he imagined, that reform being contemned, and the hatred against the clergy redoubled, an enemy was about to be produced, more formidable to the Church than the Bohemian one."

Savonarola saw with that quickly penetrating and discerning power of vision which belongs to genius of the highest order, if not with organs of intellectual vision, endowed with more than natural gifts and inspirations,—that terrible calamities were impending over the Church, that the acquisition of territorial wealth and influence, and of inordinate affluence arising from the possessions of the Church, in real and personal estate, could not fail to excite cupidity in the breasts of secular princes.

He foresaw the result of this great crime against one of the first principles of Christian doctrine: that attempts would be made to discredit the clergy, to lessen their influence, to hurt their authority, to defame, and then to plunder them; that the clergy in return, to defeat those attempts of brutal and rapacious men, would fall into the commission of acts unworthy of the clerical character; sometimes of violence, other times of chicanery and intrigue, and of choler, too, going to the extent of a terrible misapplication of the uses of spiritual power.

It was with a profound conviction of those evils impending over the Church, and with a most earnest desire and heart-felt anxiety to stay them, and to ward off, if it were possible, the anger and retribution of heaven, that he exclaimed, in the language that of old belonged to those inspired by heaven:—

"Pray God that it may be permitted to me to preach the gospel to unbelievers. But we commend our bark to God, that he may come to its aid if it should strike on rocks."—*Lent Ser. of Sav. in Flor.* 1495.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY CAREER OF SAVONAROLA, FROM HIS CHILDHOOD TO HIS ENTRANCE INTO RELIGIOUS LIFE IN 1475, IN HIS TWENTY-THIRD YEAR.—SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY IN THE TIME OF SAVONAROLA, AND ANTECEDENT TO IT.

"I entered the cloister to learn how to suffer; and when sufferings visited me, I made a study of them, and they taught me to love always, and to forgive always."—*Sermon of Savonarola.*

THE ancient and honourable family of Girolamo Savonarola was originally of Padua. The first of them who came to settle in Ferrara was Michele, the grandfather of the subject of this history, a distinguished professor of the physical sciences, and a physician of great eminence, distinguished for his medical writings.

He was invited to the Court of Ferrara by Nicolo D'Este, Marquis of that territory, and accepting the invitation, repaired to Ferrara, and established himself there with his family. This must have been prior to 1440; for the Marquis Nicolo ceased to govern Ferrara, if not to exist, in that year.*

The paternal grandfather of Girolamo, Michele Savonarola, who was born in 1384, had the distinction conferred on him, at an early period of his career, of the Cross of the Order of the Knights of Rhodes. He wrote several treatises on medical subjects, of which Castellan treats in his *Vitæ Illustrorum Medicorum*, Vander Linden in his learned work, *de Scriptoribus Medicis*, and Tiraboschi extensively in his *Storia della Letteratura Italiana.*† Nicolo Savonarola, the son of Michele, married Anna Helena Buonacorsi, a lady of Mantua, of a noble family,

* Sansovine, Case Illustri D'Italia, p. 359.

† The principal works of Michele Savonarola are the following:—1. Compendium Medicinæ; 2. Opusculum Physionomiæ; 3. De Balneis et

of whose connexion with important events in Italian history, we have many notices in Guicciardini's and Muratori's works.

Of seven children by this marriage, five were boys, and two girls. The eldest son, named Ognibene, served with some distinction in the army. The second son was named Bartholomeo. The third, Girolamo, the subject of this biography, was born in Ferrara, the 21st of September, 1452, and was remarkable, even in his childhood, for gravity, composure, and devotion. The fourth, named Marco Aurelio,* entered the church, became a secular priest, and, ultimately, a Dominican Friar, having received the habit from his brother Girolamo. The fifth son was named Alberto—he studied medicine, and became distinguished for scholarship, benevolence, and amiability of disposition. The eldest daughter was named Beatrice, who died unmarried; the other, Clara, married, and on the death of her husband, went to reside with her brother Albert. Of the mother of these children scarcely anything is to be found respecting her character, intellectual qualities, or career, recorded in cotemporaneous histories. In two very long letters addressed to her by her son Girolamo, after he had entered religious life, we have all the information relating to her that is known to exist; and all that is valuable in those communications which have been recently brought to light by Padre Marchese, will be found in a succeeding chapter.

The education of the young Girolamo had been taken charge of by his grandfather, Michele; and there can be little doubt, from the notices of his writings that are to be found in Tiraboschi,

Thermis; 4. Practica de Ægritudine; 5. De Arte Conficendi Aquæ Vitæ; 6. Introductio in Medicinam Practicam; 7. Libra de Naturæ; 8. De Magnificis Ornamentis Regiæ Civitatis Paduæ; 9. Disputatio tra la Gotta è Medicina Dedicato Allo Illustre Principe Marchese Nicolo da Este. An edition of this work, printed in Pavia, 4to., 1509, is in the author's possession. The subject of it is treated with great ability, manifesting very extensive knowledge and experience, and no inconsiderable degree of wit and humour.

* Mirandola mentions him as Maurelio, or Marcus.

and from a work of his particularly, treating of Padua, that he was admirably fitted for the task he had undertaken.*

Death, however, unfortunately deprived the young Girolamo, at an early age, of his kind and able instructor, Michele, who died about 1462, in his seventy-ninth year, when Girolamo was only ten years of age. The father of Girolamo soon after caused him to attend the lectures in the public schools of science and letters in Ferrara, where the scholastic theology of that age was much in vogue. In those vague subtleties, in attempts to master which the mind of youth was then frittered away, Savonarola's time and talents were likewise employed for some time, till at length, disgusted with the jargon and dialectics of Aristotle, he discarded that pagan philosopher, and betook himself to the study of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, and on that foundation and the Holy Scriptures he chiefly built the structure of his religious faith.

We are told by Burlamacchi, that "during the life of his grandfather he made good progress in grammar and Latinity. Afterwards, when his father made him apply to the study of the liberal sciences, he shewed the finest talents and most acute intellect; and to these studies he applied himself day and night, with such assiduity, that in a short time he became famous for his acquirements, far surpassing all others of his fellow-students. Nor did he profit less in the study of good manners, and of holy morals. While yet in the tender years of childhood, it was his delight to be alone, employing himself in making little altars, and performing acts of devotion."

Later he gave himself up wholly to the study of sacred theology, devoting to it nearly all his time, except the leisure which he reserved for the composition of Tuscan verse, to which he was passionately addicted. "He followed in philosophy the peripatetic system of Aristotle," observes Burlamacchi, "but

* Tiraboschi makes mention of Michele as the author of two works in praise of Padua—"Laudi Padouæ"—written by him in 1443, and for the first time published by Muratori in his great work Scrip. Italic. vol. xxiv. pp. 1137, *et seq.* Stor. della Let. Ital. tom. v. part i. p. 193.

principally of St. Thomas, *from whose writings he said 'he had learned nearly all the knowledge he had acquired,* deeming that saint the most excellent philosopher who had ever appeared among the Latin sages.' In studying the sentiments of other men, he did not adopt the peculiar conceits and notions of the authors whom he read, but formed his own opinions, and always turned his regard towards truth and reason. When he found some author whose writings did not satisfy him, he could not be induced to continue its perusal, but freely told his preceptors it did not please him."*

Of the pleasure he once took in the philosophy of Plato, he said at a later period of his career, in one of his discourses in public—"I was then in the error of the schools, and I studied with great assiduity the Dialogues of Plato, but when God brought me to see the true light, I destroyed and cast away from me those futilities which they had inspired me with the idea of writing. What does all this wisdom of philosophy serve for, if a poor old woman, established in the faith, knows more of the true wisdom than Plato?"

When the young Girolamo commenced his studies in the public schools of Ferrara, the *divina Caligo* of dogmatic theology was at its height, all the false science of the scholastic philosophy and metaphysics reigned in the university.

For many years his time and talents were given to these pursuits with evident reluctance. But, fortunately for him, the high gifts of genius, and that most rare accompaniment of it, strong, sound, justly-discriminating common sense, preserved his mind from being injured or impaired by this long devotion of its powers to the mere external appliances to knowledge. However wearied his faculties may have been in the course of those protracted studies, by the "fratras et jargon d'Aristote," it is certain his reasoning powers were sharpened by the habits thus acquired, of close investigation of all propositions he had to deal with; and while other students turned this one advantage of their pursuit to the account of "their school phi-

* Bur. Vit. da Sav. tom. i. p. 531.

losophy" alone, Savonarola made it subservient to the purposes of all true spiritual knowledge, the aim and end of which was the attainment of the science of the saints—an acquaintance with the wisdom of Christ, and the mystery of the cross.

In the time of Savonarola, the ecclesiastical theology was in full vogue in all the Italian schools, colleges, and conventual establishments. It pervaded all literature dedicated to religion, and had taken possession of all the chairs of the universities, and all the pulpits of the Italian churches. This fact requires to be borne in mind, for it will be found that Savonarola's numerous treatises and sermons, though they manifest a perfect acquaintance with it, and an extensive use of its formulas and technicalities, exhibit also a settled purpose to substitute for it a scriptural theology, and to introduce into his discourses and exhortations the spirit of Christianity, and the science of the Saints, instead of the subtleties of Aristotle, Abelard, Scotus, and Peter Lombard.

This innovation was looked on by Savonarola's ecclesiastical contemporaries, by the rationalists of the schools, and the sophists of the academies, with alarm and distrust. The interests of religion were thought to be endangered by it. There was a sort of veneration for Aristotle, a blind unreasoning acquiescence in the prevailing opinion that was entertained, of the absolute necessity of his system of ethics, for the explanation and illustration of the great truths of Christianity. This sentiment of devotion had a certain degree of pagan idolatry in it.

Minutius Felix, after examining the various systems of the pagan philosophy, came to conclusions not very favourable to the "wild speculations of learned men," *the deliramenta doctrinæ* of the several religions he inquired into.

Had he examined the various systems of scholastic theology of a later period, perhaps he might have referred to his former judgment, on the other *deliramenta doctrinæ* of the heathen theologians, for his opinion of their merits.

"In my opinion, the whole of their systems present to us nothing but the gross darkness of ignorance, and the blackness

of deceit, with errors wide and infinite; mere fancies, and crude conceptions, and ignorance which sets all comprehension at defiance. I have therefore submitted to examine them, from a desire to point out the contradictions which prevail in their writings, and to show that they lead into discussions incapable either of limit or of definition; and further to convince you, that the end and result of them all is unsatisfactory and productive of no advantage whatsoever; without any support from matter of fact, or from the evidence of reason."

The Greeks and the Romans had their "scholastic theologians," and very contentious and bewildering elucidators of sound doctrine were they.

"These descendants of Thales were, by all accounts, a set of vain and wordy rhetoricians, really very ignorant, while pretending to know and explain everything. But to form adepts consummate in the wiles and chicane of sophistry was their chief ambition."*

"When Abelard commenced his studies," says the author of Les Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire des Egaremens de L'Esprit Humain, "philosophy was divided into three parts, logic, morals, physic. Of these three parts, logic was chiefly cultivated, and it included metaphysics. Logic was only the art of ranging under certain classes the different subjects of human knowledge, of giving them names, and of forming on these names reasonings or syllogisms."

Abelard extended the science to the explanation of dogmas of faith, established by authority, so as to render them by explanation intelligible to reason. "He undertook to explain the mysteries and truths of religion, and to render them cognizable to the senses, by comparisons, and to combat the objections raised by sophists, who attacked religion, by the authority of philosophers, and by the principles of (profane) philosophy.†

* Rome as it was under Paganism, and as it is under the Popes, vol. i. p. 25.

† Les Memoires, &c. 12mo. tome i. p. 273. *Paris*, 1762.

Abelard, who flourished in the middle of the twelfth century, and died in 1142, discussed theological questions on the Aristotelean system of ethics, and was the first writer who gave notoriety to this mode of dealing with sacred subjects. His efforts at establishing a scholastic divinity were improved on by his disciple Peter Lombard, "The Master of the Sentences," whose celebrated work, "The Sentences," appeared in 1172.

Peter Lombard was cast into the shade by Albertus Magnus, a Dominican monk of great erudition, who has left behind a vast legacy of obsolete learning in twenty-one volumes; he flourished in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and died in Cologne, in 1280.

It has been said of him, as it was said of Cicero, by a writer of huge tomes of his time, "His body might have been burnt to ashes with his books alone."

The ponderous tomes of Albertus Magnus consist chiefly of commentaries on Aristotle, and adaptations of his metaphysics to all sorts of subjects and reasonings on their presumed connexion with theology.

Albertus Magnus, in his turn, was eclipsed by his illustrious disciple Thomas Aquinas, a man of gigantic intellect, and most wonderful attainments, a member of his order, "The Angel of the Schools," "The Angelical Doctor," "The Eagle of Theology," who flourished likewise in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and died before his master in 1274, leaving seventeen volumes in folio of scholastic divinity, but of matter and doctrine widely different from the re-produced ethics of Aristotle, and rhetorical subtleties of that kind, which had been transferred to the pages of all his metaphysical predecessors "of the Schools."

Thomas Aquinas accomplished works, the labour of which might have been deemed more than sufficient for the occupation of three or four lives of a long duration. He died, however, at the early age of forty-eight years.

Above all the scholastic theologians of his time, he distinguished himself for making the Holy Scriptures, and the

decisions of the Church the touchstone of all doctrines, in contradistinction to those who applied the ethics of metaphysicians, primarily or solely, to the elucidation of mysteries of faith, or questions in theology. He founded a new school of scholastic divinity, and he brought to his task a vast genius, just in its conceptions, quick to perceive, and stable in its convictions; profound and lucid, marvellously acute and penetrating, and imbued with a spirit of piety, which predominated in all his undertakings, and shed an influence over his writings, that were looked upon in his time as the results of superhuman knowledge. He disembarrassed religious enquiries from the trivial subtleties of mere logicians, and established a solid critical science of inquiry into matters that are essential to religion.

To the genius of John Duns Scotus, an Irish Franciscan, of vast intellectual powers and theological acquirements, the subtle doctor of the schools, who was born about 1273, and died in Cologne in 1308, is mainly due the merit (once above all praise) of reducing the ethics of Aristotle into a disputative science adapted to ecclesiastical enquiries, a system of philosophy held to be applicable to the solution of all theological speculations and settlement of controversial subjects, in an argumentative manner strictly rational. Many attempts to do this had been made by others before John Scotus, but not with the success that crowned the labours of the latter, in the opinion of Mosheim, and many of the most eminent theological writers.

John Duns Scotus exhausted his vital powers, even at an earlier age than St. Thomas of Aquinas; he completed his twelve folio volumes, and ended all his labours, before he had attained his thirty-fifth year. Scotus, in all his latter works, seemed to write as if he thought a special mission had been assigned to him *à rehabiliter* Aristotle in the schools of theology, and to bring the new system of theological criticism, established by St. Thomas, into disrepute. Hence arose the wordy war in the schools of the Thomists and the Scotists, and the battles between the partisans of the *universalè a partè rei* doctrine maintained by Scotus, and the *universalè a partè mentis* supported

by his opponents, in which such a vast deal of ink was shed to little purpose.

Of such disputations, as of similar speculations of old, it might be said: "It is far easier to comprehend the doctrine of the rising and setting of the stars, than to understand these strange contortions and eccentricities of speech."

A new school divinity champion in the course of a few years made his appearance on this stage of the controversy, in the person of an eminent Dominican, Bishop Durand, or Durandus, in the see of Puy, in 1318, and of Meaux in 1326. This celebrated prelate wrote commentaries on "The four books of the Sentences." The art of subtilizing theological speculations, and demolishing dialectics of former schoolmen, "d'une maniere extremement tranchante," acquired for Durandus great celebrity in his time, and obtained for him the honours of a martyrdom of censures and controversies for a large portion of his life, with opponents of his opinions, or rather misinterpreters of his terms concerning the important subject of the "*Concours immediat*," and the "*Création continuel.*"

"Le Docteur très Resolutif," though a man of great wit and genius, who is said to have mystified "The Sum" of St. Thomas very considerably, who combated his opinions, and involved the subtleties of John Duns Scotus in more inextricable perplexities than they were in before, and who encumbered "The four books of the Sentences" with a vast amount of explanatory matter and additions, from other writings on the same subject, that mystified the old scholastic theology, by an eclectic admixture of metaphysics, — left scholastic theology in a worse condition than he found it, when he died, in 1333.

The great misfortune of the all-absorbing taste for scholastic theology, was the want of inclination and of leisure which it occasioned for the pursuit of more ennobling as well as useful studies. "Quibus occupatus et obsessus animus quantulum loci bonis artibus relinquit." (Dial. de Oratoribus, sec. 29.)

In the many wars waged with an excessive zeal, sometimes bordering on ferocious ardour and internecine fury, by the

champions of the several controverted opinions in scholastic theology, none were carried on with greater bitterness, and sometimes savagery, than the disputes between the Nominalists and the Realists. Their principal differences seem to have been occasioned by their disagreements respecting the existence or non-existence of abstract or universal ideas.

Gerson, in his day, represented, by the universal consent of Catholic Doctors, the opinions of the Nominalists. Huss, on the other hand, had to contend for his life too, with the odium that was cast on him by Gerson, at the Council of Constance, on account of the notoriety of the Realist principles he advocated when he was in France.

In conclusion, on this subject of scholastic divinity, it may be observed, that with all its unprofitable wars of words and sham fights of opinion, rhetorical niaseries, formulas, and sophisms in all the solemn garbs of dialectics, it exercised the reasoning powers, gave acumen and precision to modes of thought and style of composition. And thus scholastic divinity eventually rendered the same service to theology that alchemy did to chemistry and metallurgy.

In the condition which Durandus left scholastic theology, in 1333, Savonarola found it, when he entered the Dominican order, and took the habit in the year 1476.

The mind of the young friar of Ferrara was not of a nature to receive such teaching as was to be derived from the pages of these scholastic theologians. The very names of Aristotle, Abelard, Scotus, and Durandus, eventually became odious to him.

His spirit pined after truth, the truth revealed in the Holy Scriptures, taught by the Church of Christ, inculcated in the works of the fathers, discernible in the simplicity of Christian life, the triumph of the Cross, the mystery of mysteries, the re demption of mankind.

His mind was occupied with the sacred duty of preserving the precious deposit of the faith, the spouse of the Holy Spirit of Truth, the Church of Christ, to which the care of that deposit had been committed, uncontaminated, uncorrupted, and

spotless as the mother of his Lord. These were the great subjects of meditation on which all the faculties of Savonarola were fixed. He had no taste for any studies or pursuits, save those which were calculated to refine, to improve, to elevate the intellectual character and social position of his fellow-men. He thought that the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, more than all other philosophical productions, were calculated to produce such effects. A very slight acquaintance with the works of Savonarola is sufficient to shew what a profound study he had made of the works, and especially of "The Sum" of St. Thomas. The best evidence of the excellent and extensive use he made of those works, will be found in his principal treatises, "Triumphus Crucis," and "De Simplicitate Vitæ Christianæ," and especially in his discourse, "Circa il Reggimento e Governo degli Stati e Specialmente sopra el governo della citta di Firenze," a production which embodies the principles and opinions of St. Thomas's most remarkable treatise on government, "*De Regimine Principis.*"

All historians who treat of Savonarola are agreed on one point, that his youth was full of promise, and of evidence of great virtues, as well as extraordinary intellectual endowments. And all those who make themselves acquainted with his history and his writings, become convinced that he possessed a singular combination of qualities, fitted to constitute an eminently great and heroic man, destined to influence the most important events of his time; and as the master-spirit of his age, to make not only a powerful impression on the minds of his fellow-men, of his own age and country, but to leave a lasting impression on the minds of men of succeeding ages, throughout the civilized world.

He possessed all the qualities which one might expect at the hands of nature, for a man to whom a great mission had been given by Divine Providence. His physical conformation was adapted to the office, and fitted for the labours of a Reformer.

Though of a sanguineous temperament, and his nervous system most delicately organized, rendering him remarkably susceptible of external impressions, and sensitive even to atmo-

spherical influences, he possessed bodily strength and robustness, that made him capable of enduring great fatigues, of going through extraordinary labours. He possessed, moreover, a penetrating spirit, an ardent love of truth and justice, natural feelings that were affectionate, kind, and pitiful. He had strong sympathies with poverty and suffering, and equally strong antipathies for pride, oppression, and meanness of every kind.

The simplicity of his nature was strongly contrasted with the enthusiasm of his zeal, the heroism of his character, the vivacity of his genius, and the inflexible adherence to the principles of true Christian morality, when he had to deal with sophistry, error, injustice, or impiety.

The peculiar character of Savonarola's mind, and the consciousness of his mission, are very manifest in two poems of his; the earliest of those sacred lyrics of the young man of Ferrara, whose love of study and of solitude was already beginning to attract the attention of his friends, and of his instructors and fellow-students.

The earliest of the poems of Savonarola, the Canzona "De Ruina Mundi," was composed in 1472, in his twentieth year. This piece is a lamentation for the calamities of the times, the prevalence of luxury, avarice, and impiety, couched in poetry more remarkable for its vigorous expression than the exquisite harmony which distinguishes that of Petrarch, but breathing a spirit of lofty enthusiasm, and love of virtue and of religion, which Petrarch was a stranger to. If it were not for his belief in Providence, the author of the "Canzona de Ruina Mundi," tells his readers in the first stanza, he would have been utterly confounded at the frightful aspect of the world, turned from God, and devoted to unworthy pursuits; and at the continual encounter of men forgetful of God, despisers of his mercy, or deniers of his attributes. Sceptres, he tells us, had passed into the hands of pirates; Religion had turned her face earthwards, and crawled in the midst of worldly lures and grovelling cares:

"A terra va San Pietro
Quivi lussuria ed ogni preda abbonda
Che non so come 'l ciel non se confonde."

The earth appears, in fact, to him oppressed with every vice; and Rome, the chief of nations, hangs her head, as if she was sensible of the other great ruin that had fallen on her. Every one around her seems disposed to add something to her sorrows. It seems to him the time was past of piety, the time was past of purity:

"Passata è il tempo pio e il tempo Casta."

The canzona ends with some very remarkable words, addressed to the Spirit of his song.

Audin de Rians, the collector and publisher of the Poems of Savonarola,* states this canzona was composed by Savonarola prior to his entering the Dominican order. It has some internal evidence in it of the fervour of youth and classical lore of a poetical imagination, influenced by the prevailing taste of the fifteenth century, for allusions in the same poetical pieces to sacred and profane personages. But de Rians, nevertheless, observes of this poem: "In this canzona, as in the other"—De Ruina Ecclesiæ—"we find not the divine refinement of some other Italian poets; but, reading it, one feels all the pure love, full of energy and zeal for what was just and good, that burned in the soul of the young man of Ferrara."

I have endeavoured to render this poem into English verse as faithfully to the thoughts of its author as it was in my power to do, and so far, I hope, I have been successful.

Surely, the mind of the young man of twenty, from which proceeded the deep thoughts we find given expression to in this canzona, was of no common order.

He by whom it was composed, it is said, at that period of his career, was more familiar with the philosophy of Plato than with any other ethics. But there are evidences in it, as de Rians has truly observed, of a spirit of pure love, and a great zeal for justice and goodness.

* Poesie de Jeronimo Savonarola, 8vo. *Firenza*, 1847.

THE CANZONA "DE RUINA MUNDI,"

COMPOSED BY SAVONAROLA IN 1472, AT THE AGE OF TWENTY.

I.

Ruler of earth, thy Providence I know
Is infinite, else were this world of ours
A dreary Chaos, finding as we do
Disorder all around, and all the powers
Of virtue and of morals in men's cores
Spent and exhausted, and no shining light
Of faith, no shame of vice, but folly that ignores
Thy law, or deems thy justice sleeps—Thy might
Has failed, and scoffs at all that's sacred in thy sight.

II.

Wisdom divine perhaps retards the doom
Of man for his defection; it may be
That retribution's near—its sword will come
With direst terrors soon and suddenly.
Virtue at last this world of ours will flee—
Here home, or shrine, or altar she has none;
The sceptre's swayed by men who wait for prey;
Justice, religion, goodness are unknown,
One only wonders how mankind are not undone.

III.

See how the satyr revels in delights,
How proud, licentious, vicious in the extreme:
The spirit sickens at those carnal sights—
Here men in purple, there in motley seem,
Blind admiration's idols, and its theme.
How long, O Lord, those scenes wilt thou endure
Of riot on the part of those who deem
Their usurpation sanctioned and secure,
While thy true servants suffer daily more and more?

IV.

Happy he's deemed who now by rapine thrives,
By bloodshed even prospers all the more;
By spoil of widows and of orphans' lives,
And by the ruin of the helpless poor.

The man is held to have the noblest core
By force or fraud most booty who obtains,
Contemns the gospel, and by ev'ry lure
Seeks from a world that smiles on Godless gains,
Its worthless honours, and that aim of his attains.

V.

The earth with every vice is so oppressed,
The sum cannot be told; Rome even now,
With downward look and anguish in her breast,
Sees her great office marred by friend and foe.
How this new ruin fills her heart with woe,
To see what Marius, Sylla, left undone,
Accomplished by her sons and daughters too,
Each warring with her peace and her renown:
The times of faith indeed and chastity are gone!

VI.

Now downcast worth and goodness fold their wings,
The rabble shout, the thoughtless jest and smile;
And luxury in syren accents sings,
And grave philosophy doth e'en beguile
The few who keep in the right road; meanwhile
All hope would sink within me at this doom,
To see the triumphs of the false and vile;
But that I know the reign of Christ will come,
With joy for justice, for all oppressions grief and gloom.

FINALE.

Oh, muse of mine! be it thy destiny
To leave the purple vesture still unsought,
To fly the palace and the court, and be
A chary keeper of thy heart's deep thought;
A stranger to the wisdom that is fraught
With worldly instincts and a foe to men
Of worldly minds, of sordid views: let nought,
Oh muse of mine, thy spotless plumage stain,
Or the swift pinion, as it soars on high restrain!

The most poetical composition of Savonarola is of a date three years later than the preceding; and the evils that had fallen on the Church, are the subject of it.* The first intimation

* This piece was written twenty years before the time of Alexander.

of the mission on which the young man of Ferrara was about to enter, and which, with all its perils and responsibilities, seems to be clearly and distinctly before his eyes, is given in this poem. But that intimation is clothed in such allegorical language, and with such apparently purposed obscurity and mysticism, for motives of prudence no doubt necessary for safety in those evil times, that the difficulty of translating this poem so as to make the true meaning of every passage intelligible to the English reader, is far greater than that of translating the other piece.

If critics may find some evidence of a close acquaintance with the works of Plato in the canzona "De Ruina Mundi," they will certainly find much more evidence of an intimate acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and a predilection in particular for the Apocalypse of St. John, in the next poem of his in the order of time and of composition, "De Ruina Ecclesiæ."

This piece was written the same year he entered into religious life; but whether immediately before or after that date, is unknown.

THE CANZONA "DE RUINA ECCLESIÆ."

COMPOSED ABOUT 1475, (ÆTATE AUCTORIS, 23.)

I.

Oh thou chaste Virgin! thy unworthy son
(Since thy eternal spouse approves that claim)
In sadness oft recalls those times bye-gone,
Of glorious perils, martyrdoms, of fame
For ignominious death, of the bright flame
Of faith. Alas! those times exist no more,
Zeal there is none: the men are not the same;
Heroic Christian men they were of yore,
The pristine love must now be sought in Mary's core.

II.

Alas! where must we seek the precious stones?
The burning lamps of faith, the sparkling gems?
The tenderness of heart, the tears and groans?
Where the white stoles and the sweet hymns?

The zone of chastity, the evangelic themes?
The Apostolic twelve, the great wings, where
The eagle and the lion? no brightness beams
In those dark symbols are around thee here.
Thou chaste one, tell me why thy griefs are so severe?

III.

The ancient holy mother I addressed,
Made with accustomed sadness my demand,
And she likewise with sorrows long oppressed,
Tho' poor, most pitiful, now pressed my hand,
And deigned e'en while she wept thus to respond:
"When I see Pride on holy ground intrude,
And worldly schemes by sacred persons planned,
My wearied spirit sinks, its strength's subdued,
But theirs with greater courage seems to be imbued.

IV.

"Oh, son!" she cried, "those ruthless deeds behold,
Things are revealed, from stones might call forth tears.
No plants of living faith or truth unfold
Their leaves: no ancient purity appears,
Oh, piteous sight! enough to cause the spears
And swords of Pagan Rome itself to rise
And make the work of retribution theirs!
The milk that nourished souls, our sons despise;
The breast that teemed with love now bleeds before their eyes.

V.

"Virtue still goes in rags, with pallid cheeks,
With hair dishevelled and with garland torn,
The virgin honey of sweet doctrine seeks,
But for all food to heathen lore must turn.
The scorpion's sting by her must still be borne,
The serpent's wile, the locust's mischief hence,
Her sacred cause and mine have I to mourn;
Her solemn feasts and shrines made a pretence
For acts that only give the saints of God offence!

VI.

"Weep for the wrongs religion has endured,
Ye aged men, who stand around the throne,
Apostles, Saints, Disciples of the Lord,
Angels of heaven, Evangelists, look down,

Martyrs weep tears of blood, there is not one
Of all the stars and planets unrestrained
In their swift course, exulting in each zone,
To speak as mortals feel—that is not pained
To see the Temple spoiled and the white marble stained.

VIII.

"Oh say, chaste mother!" I exclaimed once more,
"Whose soul contents itself with plaints of woe,
What strength remains of all thy wasted power?
What pride is this that dares to war with you?
She speaks of foul corruption, as her foe;
And I of force and ardour to restrain
The mighty wings of pride and lay them low.
But words like these with her are worse than vain,
For she needs only tears and prayers from mortal men."

FINALE.

Spirit of song, I know those strains of mine,
The scorpion sting of slander must endure;
Or it may be, that men will not divine
Their meaning, and perhaps 'tis even more
To be desired, they should my thoughts ignore—
For my own peace of mind—nay, better too,
Leave the dread struggle with abuse and power,
And thus for quiet sake the task forego,
That seems to be imposed on me, for weal and woe.

I have endeavoured to give the true sense, but have no idea of having done justice to the poetry of the original.

We are told that Girolamo Savonarola was a silent, joyless child, given to seclusion—that he shared neither in the amusements nor occupations of young people of his age; that he arrived to the age of twenty, without ever having been seen in the fashionable resort for the citizens of Ferrara, the public promenade.

One of his biographers, however, says that he had been strongly attached to a young lady of Ferrara; but how or when that attachment ceased, no information is given.*

* In Fontanini's Bibliotheca dell Eloquenza Italiani con le Annotazioni del Signore Apostolo Zeno, *Ven.* 4to. 1753, reference is made to a poem of

The latest of his biographers, Monsieur Carle, justly observes, that the peculiar qualities of the young Savonarola, however calculated they were to fit the future man for enterprizes of great pith and moment, are still indicative of a destiny that may well make the parents of such children thoughtful if not apprehensive in regard to their future career.

The young Girolamo grew up to manhood in a world of his own creation, of deep thoughts and solemn meditation on subjects of grave importance to the eternal interest of humanity. One opinion of his mind, from a very early period of his career, from his first entrance into college life, was a profound conviction of the vanity of all earthly honours and enjoyments.

This peculiar turn of his mind was noticed but mistaken by some of those around him, as similar peculiarities in young people are too frequently noticed and mistaken. He was supposed to be melancholy, misanthropical, over-studious, too much reserved, too little disposed to demonstrate his feelings and inward emotions. And those who thought thus were little able to appreciate his mental qualities, or to form a just opinion of the height and depths of his great intellect.

"Woe!" says Carle, "in all its accumulated wretchedness, woe to those in the constitution of whose intellectual qualities nature seems to make a sport of her ordinary rules! Woe! especially to those who have never known the joys of childhood, and in coming into life who seem to bring with them the temperament of matured man and the mind of advanced age, when the energy of ripened intellect, and the seriousness that usually comes with the cares and weight of years, establish their seat in the breast of youth! Of such persons we may prognosticate that their lives will pass in agitation, fluctuations (of fortune) of thought, in flights of ambition, regrets, passionate desires, and the isolation of mind which is caused by sadness. Christianity

Savonarola entitled the "Cameo," of a lighter strain than any of his other pieces, and even of undue levity; but there is no notice of any such poem in any of the biographers I have seen of Fra Girolamo, nor in any of the rest of his writings given elsewhere.

alone can turn away the miseries of such a wretched state of existence, and render all those dispositions useful and holy, and beneficial to themselves and others."*

For the same reasons, then, for which Socrates abstained from frequenting public assemblies, courts, and senates, and from motives also of a far more exalted character, Savonarola determined on seeking an asylum from the perils by which he felt that not only his own soul, but the whole social fabric was beset, and even religion itself was menaced, in those disastrous times in which his youth was cast, with all its enthusiasm and exaltation, its longing aspirations after good, and abhorrence for everything sordid, selfish, and profane.

A monastic community appeared to him alone to afford such an asylum.

He earnestly desired to be permitted to spend his days in a convent; but so great was his humility, and so exalted his ideas of the perfection which was required for the priestly character, that he deemed himself unworthy of sacred orders, and entertained no intention of taking them, when he resolved on retiring from the world.

The choice of a religious order was determined by his admiration for his favourite author, St. Thomas of Aquinas. Of his early feelings of reverence for "The Angel of the Schools," we may form some idea from a passage in one of his sermons long after he had joined his order, wherein he proclaimed his obligation to St. Thomas, for whatever knowledge or science he possessed, in those terms:—

"I am almost nothing, and even that little which I am, I possess because I have kept within the influence of his doctrine. He was truly profound, and when I want to become small in my own eyes, I read his works, and then it appears to me that he is a giant, and I nothing."

The idea which had been long floating in his mind, of relinquishing the world, and dedicating himself wholly to the service

* Histoire de Hieronymo Savonarola, par Piget Carle, page 59, 8vo. *Paris.*

of religion, was at length confirmed, and converted into a settled purpose, by a sermon of a monk of the Augustinian Ermitano order, an ascetic of some celebrity in the pulpit, and also by a sudden impulse which had been communicated to his mind in a dream, which some of his biographers speak of as a supernatural intimation of his vocation for a monastic life.

So Savonarola understood it, and, like Abraham, he imagined a command was given to him—"egredere de terra tua et de Cognatione tua et de patris tui et veni in terram quam monstraveris tibi."*

And after a little, like Abraham, "profectus inde in terram Australem et habitavit inter Cades et Assur;" and if we adopt the interpretation of this passage by John Scotus Erigena, "hoc est inter sanctificationem et æquanimitatem; inter quas in æterna requie omnis sanctorum felicitas constituta est."†

On the 23rd of April, 1475, Savonarola, then in his twenty-third year, a young man of fair prospects, of fine talents, and more than ordinary proficiency in science and learning, abandoning the world, home, parents, friends, and all earthly goods, quitted his father's house for the asylum of a cell in a convent of Dominicans.

He was accompanied by a young man, a native of Bologna, named Ludovico, a member of the Dominican order, the only person to whom the secret of his flight had been communicated. His intention at departure was to enter into the Dominican convent at Bologna as a lay-brother, and as such to take up his permanent abode there.

He told John Francis Pico de Mirandola, in after-years, that it was his firm intention not to assume the clerical habit when he entered the convent, so repugnant to him was the prevailing taste among ecclesiastics for mere human knowledge, and the occupation of their time in futile disputations and distinctions in

* Sav. Sermon xi. Feria 4 dopo 1mo. domenica de quaresima Anno 1497.

† De Divisione Naturæ, p. 222. 4to. *Oxon.* 1681.

terms, definitions of attributes, and the strife of contested opinions.

The Dominicans gladly received the young Girolamo as a lay-brother; but the qualities of his mind, and the spiritual gifts of the young man, were no sooner known to his superiors, than their pleasure was intimated that he should receive the clerical habit, and the duty of obedience made it incumbent on him to adopt it.

He addressed a letter of consolation to his father, written the 25th of April, 1475—written two days after his flight from Ferrara. Burlamacchi states, "that having received the clerical habit, he wrote immediately to his parents, much afflicted and grieving for his departure, a consolatory letter." But he must mean that it was immediately after his being admitted into the convent that he wrote. Rians, in his Sommario della Vita di Savonarola, in his records of the year 1475, says: "After a year of noviciate Fra Girolamo received the Dominican habit, and applied himself assiduously to the study of the Holy Fathers, and especially of the sacred Scripture, which he learned as it were by heart."

The letter to his father was in the following terms:—

"I doubt not but that you are greatly grieved at my departure, and the more so on account of that departure being kept a secret from you; but I wish you to learn my mind and intention from this letter, that you may be comforted, and understand that I have not acted so childishly as some think. And, first, I beg of you as of one who justly estimates temporal things, that you will be guided by truth, rather than by passion, as women are, and that you will judge according to the dictates of reason whether I ought to fly from the world, and execute this my thought and purpose. The reason which induces me to dedicate myself to religion is this; in the first place, the great wretchedness of the world, the iniquity of men, the debauchery, the adultery, the theft, the pride, the idolatry, the dreadful profaneness into which this age has fallen, so that one can no longer find a righteous man. For this, many times a-day with tears I have recited this verse:—'Ah, fly those cruel regions—fly those shores of co-

vetousness!' And this because I could not endure the great wickedness of certain parts of Italy; the more also, seeing virtue exhausted, trodden down, and vice triumphant. This was the greatest suffering I could have in this world: therefore, daily I entreated of my Lord Jesus Christ, that he would raise me from the mire. Continually I made my prayer, with the greatest devotion, to God, saying, 'Show me the path in which I should walk, for to Thee do I lift up my soul.'

"Now God has been pleased in his infinite mercy to show it me, and I have received it, though unworthy of such grace. Answer me then, is it not a great good for a man to fly from the iniquity and filth of this wretched world, and to live like a rational being, and not like a mere animal among swine? Indeed, it would have been in me most ungrateful, if having asked God to show me the straight path in which I should walk, when He deigned to shew it to me, I had not taken it? Oh! Jesus, rather let me die a thousand deaths, than that I should be so ungrateful as to oppose thy will.

"Then, my dearest Father, you have rather to thank our Jesus than to weep; he gave you a son, and has not only preserved him to some extent from evil to the age of twenty-two years, but has vouchsafed to choose him for his soldier. And do you not consider it a great mercy to have a son made so easily a soldier of Christ? Either you love me or you do not; well, I know you will not say you do not love me; if then you love me, as I have two parts, my soul and my body, do you most love my soul or my body? You cannot answer, my body, for then your affection would not be for me, but for the vilest part of me; if then you love my soul best, why not seek the welfare of the soul? Thus, you should rather rejoice and exult in this triumph. Nevertheless, I know it cannot be, but that the flesh must grieve, still it should be restrained by reason, especially by wise and magnanimous men like you. Do you not think it is a great affliction to me to be separated from you? Yes, indeed, believe me, never since I was born had I greater sorrow and anguish of mind than in abandoning my own father,

and going among strangers to sacrifice my body to Jesus Christ, and to give up my own will into the hands of those I never knew. But afterwards reflecting on what God is, and that He does not disdain to make of us poor worms, his servants, I could not have been so daring, as not to yield to that kind voice, especially to my Lord Jesus, who says, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' Because I know you lament that I left you secretly almost as a fugitive, let me tell you that such was my distress and the suffering of my inmost soul at having to leave you, that if I had expressed it, I verily believe before I could have departed from you my heart would have broken, and I should have changed my purpose and resolution; therefore do not wonder that I did not tell you. It is true, I left, behind the books which are placed against the window, certain writings which give you an account of my proceedings—I beg you then, my dearest father, to cease to weep, give me not more sadness and grief than I have: not of regret for what I have done, for indeed I would not revoke that, though I expected to become greater than Cæsar Augustus; but because I am of flesh, as you are, and sense is repugnant to reason, and I must maintain a cruel warfare, that the devil may not seize hold of me, particularly when I think of you. Soon will these days pass, in which the recent calamity will appear (as it now does), and afterwards I trust both you and I shall beconsoled in this world by grace, and in the next by glory. Nothing remains, but that I beseech you that as a man of a strong mind, you would comfort my mother, whom I beg, together with you, that you will bestow your blessing on me, and I will ever pray fervently for your souls.

"GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA,

"YOUR SON."*

Bologna, April 25th, 1476.

* Burlamacchi, in Vit. Sav. ap. Miscellanea Baluzii, tom. i. p. 532.—It will be observed the date of this letter is 1476, but Burlamacchi followed the old style of computation, and not observing this, several writers have fallen into chronological errors.

CHAPTER II.

MONKS AND MONASTERIES.

"We in the world's wide mouth
Live scandalized and foully spoken of."
SHAK. *Hamlet.*

"To vouch this is no proof
Without more certain and more overt test,
Than these thin habits and poor likelihoods
Of modern seeming do prefer against him."
Othello.

"Saltem daretur in sacris literis tranquillè consenescere."
ERASMI, *Epist.*

WHAT influence is it that invests monastic institutions with a sort of spirit-soothing character in the minds of those who have suffered afflictions, or seem to have anticipated them; young people, for example, in the prime of life, prematurely weaned from worldly enjoyments, interests, and ambitions, who have pined after the peaceful, calm, and spirit-subduing silence of conventual seclusion.

It was no passing caprice, or ill-considered reason, or fanciful impulsive mode of thinking, of acting on sudden resolutions, adopted in times of trial or adversity, that led the young Girolamo secretly, and with privity, from his father's house to the Dominican Convent of Bologna, in his twenty-third year. It was no such light and foolish motive that actuated the mind, and worked upon the feelings of the young Luther, when, his companion Alexis, lying dead at his feet, killed by lightning, he hearkened, in the midst of his terrors and his sorrows, to the interior voice which appeared to him to be speaking to his soul, saying, "To the Convent—to the Convent!"

* Histoire de la Vie des ecrits et des Doctrines de M. Luther, par Mon. Audin, 5 tome. *Par.* 1845.

There must have been some peculiar attraction in that institute for the stricken spirit, when the young man Luther, in his twenty-second year, nearly the same age at which Savonarola abandoned the world, at the moment his young companion was struck dead by his side, determined to embrace a monastic life; and, like Savonarola, too, without a word of intimation to any of his friends or fellow-students, on the following day, with his little package of clothes, and his Plautus and his Virgil under his arm, entered the Convent of Augustinian Friars, at Erfurt.

Luther entered the Convent of the Augustinians with his Plautus and his Virgil. Savonarola entered the Dominican Convent with his Prayer-book and his Bible.

Those convents and their cloisters were the same institutions which the wise and wealthy of highly civilized and enlightened nations, of the nineteenth century, hold in such contempt and abhorrence, — let us bear in mind how the master-spirits of their times, Jerome and Augustine, Benedict and Bernard, Dominic and Francis, thought of them,—how they fled from the storms and tempests of the world to the cloisters for repose—who, in flying to them for an asylum, they seemed to consider that humanity was deeply indebted to them.

But let us briefly inquire into the origin and nature of those first asylums and places of refuge of men fearing God, trembling for their salvation, touched by the hand of sorrow and of suffering, or sick of the vanities and miseries of a wretched world.

The anchorets from the beginning regarded the retreat of our Lord in the desert, the solitary life of St. John the Baptist, and the retirement of Elias, as examples which authorized their solitude and austerities, as we learn from St. Basil, St. Jerome, Cassian, and others.

Paul, the first hermit, one of the shining lights of that monachism, which commenced in the ruins and sepulchres of the Thebaid of Egypt, and the caverns and mountain-caves of the

desert places of Palestine, with the early persecutions of the Church, found a biographer worthy of his sanctity, austerity, intensity of love for Christ, and contempt for this world, in a man of a congenial spirit, one of the fathers of the desert and of the Church, the great St. Jerome.

The narrative of the hermit's life is certainly devoid of any of that kind of interest which is inspired by accounts of improvements in machinery, the construction of railways, or the fluctuations in the price of the raw material of woollen or silken textures.

But there is a kind of interest, if I mistake not, in the closing passage of that biography, of an anchoret of the wilderness, which will find some response in the hearts even of worldly-minded men, who are wont to hear monks and monachism treated with the most profound contempt.

"Perhaps," says St. Jerome, "at the close of this little book, some who are ignorant of his inheritance—who adorn their houses with marble, and cover their estates with elegant villas—may ask, 'Why were all these wanting to this poor aged man?' You drink out of a cup of gems; he was content with one which nature supplied, the hollow of his own hands. You clothe yourself in embroidered tunics; he was clothed in a garb such as your slaves would not wear. But, on the other hand, to this poor man paradise was opened; for you, rich men, perdition is prepared. He, though naked, was clothed in the robe of Christ; you, clothed in fine linen, lack that better raiment. Paul, covered with a little dust, is about to rise to glory; you, slumbering under marble sepulchres, shall be consumed with all your possessions. Spare yourselves, I beseech you, spare the wealth you love. Why should you wrap your dead in gilded robes? Why should your vain pride linger among your mourning and your tears? Will not the bodies of the rich decay unless they be folded in silk? I intreat you who read these things, that you would be mindful of Jerome a sinner, who, if the Lord would give him the choice, would much rather

have Paul's humble clothing with his merits, than the purple robe of kings with their punishment."*

Cenobites, living in "Laura," differed from the anchorets in many particulars; they did not abide altogether in solitude, but partly lived in community, so far as assembling for spiritual exercises and religious duties in one place of worship; though their cells were generally detached, they were associated under fixed rules, and the government of a superior.

In the East, we first hear of them, chiefly in conjunction with the name of St. Antony, towards the year 305; but previous to the fourth century, there were Cenobites living in Laura, called "Therapeutes."†

They were the first who called their small cells or lodges "Monasteries." They combined community of life with solitude, and practised great austerities; but from the mention made of them by some early writers, it seems more than doubtful whether they were not rather an off-shoot of Judaism, by whose members the Jewish ritual observances and traditions had been discarded, and had only adapted to their notions of a religious reform some of the leading doctrines of Christianity. Eusebius, however, considers them as Christian Cænobites.

It is certain there were communities of virgins who had taken the vow of chastity prior to 270.‡

Origen speaks, in his letter to Celsus, of the *Ascetes* of his time, renowned for the austerity of their lives. The Acts of Saint Inda and Saint Domna speak of religious communities in Nicomedia, in the reign of the Emperor Maximian. Saint Cyril, who was Bishop of that See, was a protector of those ancient monasteries, and a founder of new ones.

The origin of the monastic institutions, regulated by some prescribed rules extensively recognized, is almost universally attributed to St. Antony. He was born in Egypt, about the

* Vita Pauli.

† Histoire Monastique d'Orient par une membre de la Congregation de S. Maur, p. 9. 8vo. *Par.* 1680.

‡ Histoire Monastique, p. 19.

year 250. He abandoned the world in the year 270, and died, in 356.

In the beginning of the fifth century, the earliest regularly constituted monasteries of Cænobites were established by St. Benedict.

The Laura were to be substituted by monastic houses. The Institute varying with the locality, and the peculiarities of the holy person who was at the head of it, was to become a regular system for the government of men dwelling in one place devoted to religion.

In Benedict's account of this great reform, and the rules of an institute which became the basis of all the monastic institutions of the middle ages, he describes four classes of monks existing in his time; Cænobites, Anchorets, Saraibites, and Gyrovagi.

The two last orders were held then in little repute.

The "Tractatus," which is the prologue to the Benedictine Rule, begins with the word "Resurgamus." The text of the discourse, prefixed to the proposed reform, is the verse of the 94th Psalm—"To-day, if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts."

The way to mollify and bend them to the will of God, and bring them to a due understanding of the words of Sacred Scripture, Benedict tells his brethren, is to be filled with the fear and the love of God.

The Rule of St. Benedict was specially intended for the Cænobites. Each community was to be under the government of one abbot duly selected for his office, on account of peculiar qualifications for it, and fitness to instruct and to direct the brethren, to treat them as a father, and rule them in a patriarchal and paternal spirit.

The abbot had power to reprove and expel, to separate from communion, and even to punish with stripes, offenders against the rules. But on all grave matters he was to consult the fraternity in chapter or council. Having heard the opinions of the brethren, he was left to act on his own judgment.

Obedience to authority stands first in the order of importance, in the list of virtues required of "the true monk."

Silence and recollection, self-sacrifice and humility, are enjoined him in connection with it.

The order of the Church service, or canonical hours of prescribed devotion, is duly set forth and appointed:—lauds, prime, tierce, sexts, nones, vespers, and complines. Each community was divided into decades, and a dean had the special charge of the ten members of each decade.

All property was to be in common, and from the time of entrance, no member was to possess aught that he could call his own.

Precedence was to be taken according to priority of date of admission into the convent.

There were to be no distinctions on account of former rank or station, and no exemptions on such accounts from any of the duties of the house, whether of the kitchen or the refectory.

Slight additions of bread or wine to the ordinary allowances were permitted for persons who performed those services. The ordinary food was to be bread, vegetables, and fruits.

Dinner-hour in general was at noon, and on fast days at three o'clock, when it was the only meal.

The sick were to be treated with especial care and kindness, and allowed animal food and wine. But in all matters of diet, large discretionary powers were left with the abbot. Edifying books were to be read in the refectory, especially after supper and vespers on fast days. *Idleness being injurious to the mind,* in the opinion of St. Benedict, labour was directed, manual and mental.

Hospitality was strenuously enjoined on the abbot. Guests were to be received by him with holy greeting and kindly welcome.

The abbot was to direct the attire of the community, to see that each monk had two tunics, cowls, and scapularies, duly kept and worn, and that neither raiment, food or luxuries of any

kind, save such as were allowed by the convent, were admitted or privily kept in the cells by any of the brethren.

Admission into the order was not to be lightly granted, but after several days' continuous application at the convent gate, bearing with patience the rigour that was exhibited towards the applicant, and hearing with attention and respect the explanations given to him of the austerities of monastic discipline, by the aged brother appointed to communicate with him. A year's noviciate was required previous to investiture with the habit, when the admitted brother irrevocably abandoned the world, took the sacred vows, signed the solemn obligation under his hand, or made the sign of the cross on the record of that obligation.*

Many regulations of minor importance are laid down, and connected with all are brief observations, councils, and memorable sayings of the saints, and maxims of St. Benedict himself, wherein that wisdom abounds that comes from God—a spiritualized sagacity, blended with all that is sweet and consolatory in devotion, and tender and compassionate in human feeling.

"The convents," says Monsieur Audin, in his History of Luther, "in the middle ages, were the asylums of arts and letters. The monks were then the only representatives of intelligence: it is in the cloisters we must look for paintings, sculptures, poetry, and archæology. Behold all the vast edifices, the temples, chapels, houses of prayer, they have raised! the monasteries, abbeys, priories, which they have founded and endowed! the bridges they have cast over rivers! the hospitals and infirmaries they have opened to the sick and the infirm! the schools and academies they have instituted! It is there that civilization took refuge. Without the cloisters, Europe would have grown old, and died perhaps in barbarism. Every Cœnobite order has its determined labour; some, like the Chartreux, sow the ground, cut down the forests, reclaim

* Quatuor primum approbatos religiosis quibusque vievendi regulas, &c. In Reg. S. Benedicti, p. xvii. 4to. *Argent*, 1514.

waste lands, set bounds to torrents, teach and transmit the principles of irrigation and agricultural science.

"Others, like the Benedictines, occupy themselves in transcribing and deciphering old documents, and thus preserving the titles even of our municipal liberties, or in commenting or translating the Greek and Latin texts, while simple scribes, labouring with angelic patience, were occupied in illuminating our missals and the Psalmody of the Church.

"The cloisters in Italy, for example, in the middle ages, were transformed into studios of painting, of architecture, and of sculpture. When prayers were finished, the monks ran to their work, some to one description of employment, some to another.

"Italy is full of the glory of the monks. At Florence, the greatest wonder of art in the Pitti gallery is the Saint Marc of Fra Bartolomeo. The French had to call the Friar Giocondo from Italy, to construct one of the finest bridges of the capital.

"One would say, at the sight of a convent in the Middle Age, it was a hive of industry. Some laboured in carving wood, which in their hands assumed all forms, and frequently imitated life, as well as marble did; others were occupied with explorations and paleography. Others, again, had committed to them a world of greater wonder than this world of ours—the heart of man. Asia Minor was filled with cloisters, where the poor friars were occupied night and day in transcribing the works of the poets of Greece and Rome. One hundred and fifty of their asylums existed in Calabria, and in the precincts of Naples. Behold this monastery, which projects from Macedonia on the shore of the Egean. It is the monastery of Mount Athos. Never did human institution render to civilization such services as did this house of prayer.

"Mention is made of sixty-three palaces of the Frank sovereigns, wherein the monks were employed in copying the royal charters. The Church maintained a numerous tribe of scribes, all devoted to religion, and consuming their intellectual powers in copying, in the halls of the 'Scriptoria,' manuscripts, profane or sacred.

"The cloisters have other titles to consideration. It was in the seclusion of the cloisters that the quarrels between feudal lords and vassals, in Germany especially, were frequently composed. Let us do justice to the monks. The oppressed found in them zealous defenders. If, unfortunately, their voice was not heard, and if the feudal chief appealed from them to the sword, then was there a call for an asylum in the convent, where the weak vassal was secure against the strong master, and there was consolation, a shelter, and support for him, till he was reconciled with his proud lord.

"The victor was no unfrequent visitor at the convent. He came there to expiate his sins and his successes in tears, in sackcloth and ashes. Let us not forget that the convent was the sacred ark which, in the great deluge of barbarism and shipwreck of learning, saved the Sacred Scriptures from destruction: that the first versions of them, in Germany, are due to the monks," &c.*

The Dominican order had more attractions for Girolamo than any other religious institute. It could hardly be otherwise with one of Savonarola's capacity and endowments — his exalted genius, his vast intellectual powers and imaginative tastes and faculties—his love of the fine arts, of books and bookish people, his oratorical talents, his veneration for heroic Christian men, his profound respect for the virtues—rare as they were exalted —of St. Dominick, the founder of this order; of St. Peter Martyr, his holy self-renouncing follower; of St. Thomas of Aquinas, the angelic doctor, the great glory of the Dominican order; of Alberto Magno, the master of the angelic doctor; of St. Catherina of Sienna, with all the renown of her great sanctity, of her raptures and ecstatic visions, and marvellous communications with the spiritual world, and her terrestrial ones no less marvellous, in her strange office of ambassadress, when appointed by the Pope to treat of peace between the Court of Rome and the Republic of Florence.

Dominick was nearly thirty years of age, when, happening

* Hist. de M. Luther, par Audin, tome i. p. 18.

to pass through Languedoc, about A.D. 1190, "the reveries" of the Albigenses became known to him. At Toulouse, he found his host and his family infected with the errors of the new sect. He spent an entire night, we are told, in endeavouring to convince these people of their dangerous errors, and was gratified to find, the following day, his labours had not been in vain.

The utility of preaching was now forcibly impressed on his mind; and this occurrence gave rise, eventually, to the institution of an order, to be specially devoted to the duty of preaching for the conversion of those who lapsed into error.

The Rule of the new order was not confirmed by the Pope till the year 1216.

Dominick, of the illustrious house of Guzman, was not only of a noble but of a kingly race, and if a man of genius need to be beholden to genealogy, it would appear there was no dearth of ancient blood—the "Sangre azul" of Castilian royalty—in the veins of this poor mendicant monk of the order of St. Dominick.* Many a time, no doubt, the eyes of Savonarola have been fixed on the statue of the Saint, with his inseparable companion, the faithful dog with the torch in his mouth, that is placed over the portal of San Marco, at Florence.

* St. Dominick was grand nephew of the Emperor, Frederic the First, cousin of the Emperor, Henry the Sixth, cousin german of the Emperor, Frederic the Second, on his father's side; while on his mother's, he was descended from the Norman Princes, who had conquered and colonized the Two Sicilies.—*Lacordaire's Mem. des Frères Prech.*

CHAPTER III.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CONVENTUAL CAREER OF SAVONAROLA.—LETTERS OF SAVONAROLA TO HIS MOTHER AND BROTHER.—1476 TO 1490.

Io fui degli agni della Santa gregia,
Che Domenico mena per cammino.
DANTE, *Paradiso*, Cant. x.

Tu ne cede malis; sed contra audentior ito,
Quam tua te Fortuna finet. VIRGIL, *Æn.* 6.

"Suffer not your spirit to be subdued by misfortunes; but, on the contrary, steer right onward, with a courage greater than your fate seems to allow."

FROM the time that Girolamo made his profession of the three vows of chastity, obedience, and poverty, his conduct was that of a "true monk." He was faithful to his vows, to his God, and to himself. Of his purity there never was a question; slander, that dared much against him, ventured not to impugn his chastity; it was not only unsuspected from the beginning of his career to its close, but above suspicion.

Fra Sebastiano da Brescia, a most devout member of his order, and vicar of the congregation of Lombardy, his confessor for a long time, "*che pui de cento volte lo avevo confessato*," declared his belief that Fra Girolamo had never committed a mortal sin, and extolled in the highest terms of praise the purity of his life.

"Of this signal purity," adds Burlamacchi, "there were good evidences given in his admirable commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, in the angelic visions and apparitions of saints, and chiefly that of the glorious virgin, of which we will speak in its proper place."* But there is abundant evidence that will

* Burlamacchi, Vita de Sav. ap Miscell. Baluzzi. tome i. p. 532.

carry more conviction with it than any accounts of visions and apparitions; to shew the deep sense of the importance of this virtue, in the many references to it in his sermons and in his lamentations, for the little estimation in which it seemed held even by persons exercising spiritual authority.

We hear of exclamations frequently breaking forth in the midst of his most solemn discourses in the pulpit, which electrified his audiences:—

"The chastity of the cloister is slain." "The purity of the spouse of Christ is sullied!"

Cries of the heart of outraged religion like these come ever and anon in wailing accents from the lips of Savonarola.

There was no hypocrisy in the breast from which these cries proceeded.

True obedience, in Savonarola's estimation, was one of the strongest proofs of progress in spirituality, and of advancement in perfection. In one of his treatises he says: "True glory is to do that which thou art not obliged by any natural or divine law to do. Doubtless, it is more meritorious to observe the commandments and the councils than the commandments only."

The heads of the congregation considered his unfeigned humility, and promptness to obey all his brethren, whether high or low, were never surpassed—nay, unparalleled in the order; and though he entered little into conversation, his affability and sweetness of disposition endeared him to the whole community. "Considering, moreover," says Burlamacchi, "the mode of living, and the manners of the monks of his age, and comparing them with those of great numbers of the early Christians, and of the monks of Egypt, there appeared to him to be a wide difference between them,—seeing so many of his cotemporaries intent on enriching churches, and constructing magnificent convents; and a vast number of others occupying themselves in vanities of various kinds, and especially in applying themselves more to the study of Aristotle's philosophy than to the Holy Scriptures.

"On account of those things," says Burlamacchi, "he was

grievously afflicted, he having still to perform the duties of reader and teacher of philosophy, and other profane sciences. Those duties he performed from obedience most promptly, and with great satisfaction, endeavouring, however, always to avoid reviving vain and useless questions, and reducing his instruction, as much as lay in his power, to the simplicity of the Christian faith. But at the end of every labour he turned to the Sacred Scriptures with such assiduity, that all the canonical books became perfectly familiar to him. Evidence was given of the fact of that familiar knowledge with them, subsequently in his preaching, and in his admirable manner of expounding those sacred writings.

"I have to observe," continues Burlamacchi, "in this place, that at the commencement of his career in the pulpit, he had neither voice, gesture, nor any manner (or style) that was suitable and fit for such an exercise of his functions. So that there was nothing whatever agreeable in his delivery, nor was any person pleased with it.

"But by a special gift of God, subsequently he became a wonderful and admirable preacher, being endowed with an extraordinary power of attracting attention, and also of exciting interest, in any matter that was the subject of his discourse.

"On one occasion, when he was going by water from Ferrara to Mantua, he found himself in a boat with eighteen soldiers, who were indulging in ribaldry and filthy conversation. He begged to be allowed to say a few words to them, and having obtained their permission, he addressed some observations to them, exhorting them to change their mode of life and habits; but he had not spoken long, when they gathered round him, threw themselves at his feet, and confessed to him their sins, accusing themselves of many grievous crimes, having been many years without frequenting the sacraments, and with many supplications and tears they humbly asked his pardon."*

The vow of poverty was never more strictly observed by monk of any order than by Fra Girolamo. When he entered

* Burlamacchi, Vita de Sav. in Mes. Bal. tome v. p. 433.

the convent, he abandoned all worldly goods, with the exception of some clothing and a few religious books. He took a pleasure in using the very coarsest materials in his clothing, the simplest quality and most sparing quantity of food for his nourishment. No delicacy or luxury of any kind did he ever suffer to come near him. His bed consisted of a few planks supported on stillions, with a little straw in a sack laid on the boards for a mattress. He had a natural love for the poor, and a respect for "the rights of poverty." The poor, he thought, were peculiarly loved by God, and their spiritual condition, he considered, was bettered by poverty. He spoke of the poor as his children, and of poverty as his beloved spouse. He felt for the poor as the suffering members of Jesus Christ, whom it was the main object of his mission to protect, to comfort, and to assist. He feared nothing in this world so much for the Church and its ministers as wealth. He desired nothing in life so much for religion as true hearts, and pure hands, and holy eyes, lifted up to heaven before its altar, in its name, and for its honour.

That spouse of poverty which he had taken to his bosom he remained unalterably attached to. His books were reduced to his breviary and his Bible. The public libraries of his order, and other collections of religious houses, in after-life served for his studies, when he had a necessity to refer to books in the composition of his numerous treatises and sermons.

John Francis Pico de Mirandola, in his Life of Savonarola, relates that the celebrated scholar, his namesake, John Pico, on one occasion pressed on Fra Girolamo, his most dear friend, a sum of money amounting to four hundred ducats, for the use of his sister, at a time when her position needed some assistance of a pecuniary kind; but he declined the generous offer, and he would neither accept it as a present for his sister, nor as an offering for his convent.

He reproved good-humouredly the little tendencies to vanity which he observed in his brethren. On one occasion, two Abbés of the order of St. Benedict visited him, attired in habits unusually ample, and of finer materials than were customarily

used by their order. Savonarola, after glancing at the flowing garments, spoke of the spirit of poverty which belonged to the religious orders. The Benedictines hoped there was nothing contrary to it in their habits, inasmuch as it was found that the finer was the cloth, and the larger was the dress, the longer did it last.

Fra Girolamo, smiling, said it was a pity St. Benedict and St. Bernard had not been acquainted with that fact, and had not founded on it a new rule of economy.

Either immediately previous to, or during his noviciate, he composed a treatise on "Contempt of Earthly Things," De Contemptu Mundi, which he communicated to his mother; but this piece has been lost.

In all positions in his order, in his early career, as an instructor of novices, as in his latter course as a preacher of the gospel, a spiritual director, or a writer on religious subjects, it seemed to be one of his strongest desires to inculcate a contempt for riches and worldly honours, and to make all true heroism appear to consist in conquering selfishness, and banishing cupidity from the heart.

Savonarola's religious sentiments were of a nature which connect the interests of humanity with the highest honours we are called on to pay God. On this principle his piety was based, and all his spiritual compositions were in accordance with it.

Religion chiefly consists in dealing with mankind as we would have God to deal with us, and not primarily for their sake, nor for our own, but with the view of paying homage to the God of mercy by acts of mercy, which are pleasing to Him, and of service to our fellow-creatures. Savonarola's whole career was an exemplification of the soundness of this opinion.

For the peculiar mission of the Dominican order—to preach the word of God—which obtained for their institute the title of "Order of Friar Preacher," the superiors of Fra Girolamo somewhat tardily discovered that the master of the novices possessed some peculiar fitness in respect to spirituality, piety, and zeal for religion, and a profound knowledge of the Sacred

Scriptures and the Fathers. Hitherto they had devoted his great talents to the duties of his humble office, as an instructor of the young aspirants to the habit of St. Dominic.

In 1478, after having visited some of the convents of his order throughout Lombardy, by the directions of his superiors, he was located in the convent of S. Maria d'egli Angeli, at Ferrara.* There, in his native city, he appears to have been engaged in giving lessons in sacred theology for some time. He was still there, when that city, being under the protection of the Florentine republic, was menaced by the Venetians with invasion. The superiors of the convent deemed it prudent to disperse their members throughout the different convents of the province. Providence may have had more to do with their determinations, perhaps, than they imagined, when the convent of San Marco, in Florence, was made the destination of Savonarola.

In 1482, then, we find him established in San Marco, and constituted professor of Divinity—*Maestro de Divinita*—in that convent.† Fra Girolamo was then thirty years of age, when he received orders to preach during the Lent in the church of San Lorenzo, in Florence.

The young Dominican accordingly made his first appearance in Florence in the pulpit, and in the same year the celebrated historian, Guiccianus, who was destined to throw so much light on his career, and the events of his own times, made his first appearance in the world in the same city.

Burlamacchi says that the first attempt of Fra Girolamo in San Lorenzo was an utter failure, his manner, style, action, gesture, voice—all, in fact, were against him. But it is difficult to believe that the matter of his discourse was not of a kind to strike some portion of his audience, of intelligence and discernment, as indicative of intellectual power and spirituality more than common, however ungraceful might be his action, gesture, and deportment, precipitate his mode of giving expression to particular

* Sommario della Vita, par Audin de Rians, p. 18.
† Ibid. p. 18.

passages in his discourse, and however harsh his voice appeared to be.

Who ever listened to the gifted Chalmers, even in the best days of his career, in the oratory of the pulpit, and might not well imagine how the same observations which were made with respect to Savonarola's first efforts in preaching, might not have been applied to the earliest attempts of that greatest master of pulpit eloquence, with one exception, perhaps, of our times?

Who ever listened to the first performance of an opera, or for the first time to the performance of one, and realised all or even any of the merits of it on that first occasion of listening to it?

It is not till after repeated performances have been listened to, that the ear begins to be accustomed to the peculiarities of the composer's style; and it is only when the ear is so educated by the repeated lessons of the same sounds, and so accustomed to them, that it is capable of discerning all the excellence of the harmony that may be in them, or prepared for their coming tones.

It is with eloquence as with music—we require to be familiarized with the voice, gesture, and action of the orator, before we can form a just opinion of the merits or the matter of his discourse.

In a short time, we are told, the sermons of Savonarola were only attended by "the low, common people," not even by very large numbers of them, and eventually by an audience not exceeding seventy-five persons. The young preacher was discouraged by his failure and its effects. He determined to quit Florence, to appear no more in the pulpit, and to devote his time to the instruction of the novices, as before, in the various convents of the province of Lombardy, with the sanction of his superiors. The ensuing three years and a half he passed in the convents of Tuscany and Lombardy; and the ensuing four years in the convent at Brescia.

In the year 1482, having returned from Florence into Lombardy, we are told by Burlamacchi, "that in the following year that servant of God began to be made a partaker of the divine

illumination, as we read in one of his sermons preached in the year 1494, wherein he speaks of the renovation of the church, and at the beginning of it of a special revelation as to its renewal, which he believed not only on account of the divine light, but for many reasons in confirmation of it, and especially on account of the enormity and infinite number of sins arising from the scandalous lives of Prelates of every grade—on account of the great tepidity and relaxed discipline of those in religious orders, and other things of a similar kind, which every day more and more confirmed him in the truth which had been revealed to him. Moreover, saying, that the fathers should kill their own children, and with great ignominy they would be dragged through the streets of Brescia, and that all this would come to pass in the times of those who were then alive and present: which event came to pass (accordingly) in the year 1500, when the people of Brescia were so cruelly spoiled by the French, against whom they had risen in revolt.

In the same convent of Brescia, on Christmas night, as Fra Angelo de Brescia relates, he, Fra Girolamo, remained in an ecstasy for the space of five hours, motionless, with his countenance resplendent, the brightness of which illuminated the whole church, as by others of the friars it was seen.

The same year we are told (1483) in Brescia he spoke to some persons in private of impending judgments. In public, however, any intimations he gave of them were mingled with passages from the Sacred Scriptures, and shrouded in some mystery, in order that holy things might not be subjected to contempt on the part of thoughtless people. He practised great mortification, rigid fasting, and severe discipline at this time, and devoted himself much to prayer. On one occasion, in the choir, at an early hour, while singing that verse of the psalm—"Thou art good, and in thy goodness shew me thy justifications"—he suddenly felt his mind illuminated with more brightness than ever, and speedily all doubts were dissipated respecting the events foreseen—*cose previste*, as he afterwards related to the Count of Mirandola, and oftentimes declared in

public, that of the things revealed to him, he had more certainty than philosophers had of the first principles they so much depend on. It was related in 1520 to the friars of San Marco, by the venerable father Bartholomeo R———, then prior of the convent of that city, that Fra Girolamo, being his disciple, in Brescia, on the day of St. Andrew, after dinner, he heard him preach on that chapter of the Apocalypse which speaks of the twenty-three old men, and expound the same, saying, that God had sent through the world these twenty-three old men, and one of them had come to him, saying, that he (Fra Girolamo) had to announce a great judgment, which should fall on Italy, and chiefly on Brescia; and, therefore, that he should call that city to repentance. And the same Fra Angelo, who preached at Mirandola, declared having seen with his own eyes several times, while he (Fra Girolamo) was celebrating mass, his face beaming with light, and his senses apparently entranced in a wonderful manner in a rapture.

On which account, it was his custom to celebrate the mass in a place in the church not exposed to observation, solely in the presence of the person who served.*

On this subject there are some points to be considered:—

In the first place, I must observe that Burlamacchi refers to a sermon preached by Fra Girolamo in Brescia, on a certain festival, that of St. Andrew, in which discourse he announced a revelation that had been made to him of a signal judgment of God, that would fall on the people of Brescia.

But the year is not stated when that sermon was preached. And the date of it is most important, because the account of this remarkable prediction was not given to the monks of San Marco till upwards of twenty years after Savonarola's death. And the terrible judgment that visited Brescia at the hands of the French, and in the sight of Cæsar Borgia, took place in the year 1500. I have elsewhere given some account of its horrors.

The date, however, is fortunately to be found in De Rian's "Sommario." In the year 1484, Savonarola, he tells us,

* Burlamacchi, Vita de Sav. in Bal. Mis. tom. i. p. 533.

" preached in Brescia on the subject of the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse, announcing the scourges which menaced Italy."

And this particular sermon moreover will be found referred to by Savonarola himself, in sermons of a subsequent date, which exist in print—nay, some of which were printed during Savonarola's life-time, and from those sermons some extracts will be given in a subsequent chapter.

There is much matter for deep thought in the preceding account of the origin and progress of those effects of mental prayer, which in its highest degree of intensity of devotion, and concentration of all the intellectual faculties and powers of the soul, on one heavenly object, in the language of mystic theology, is denominated " The supernatural prayer of union."

It will not do to attempt to get rid of the difficulties of this subject, by treating the whole account as deserving of ridicule; and the person to whom it relates, as an impostor; and those by whom the account is given, as fabricators, forgers of lies, and deceivers: and to dispense with all enquiry into the nature of other similar phenomena, and the evidence on which the truth of their existence rests.

The sermon predicting calamities, so unexpected and of such unexampled horror, was preached in Brescia in 1484. In 1498, the preacher who announced those calamities was put to death. And in two years after his death, in 1500, the terrible prediction was accomplished.

Up to that period of 1484, there is not a single passage in the life of Savonarola, wherein it would be possible to found a suspicion of his piety, of his truth, of his simplicity and singleness of mind. All the occurrences connected with alleged interference in political affairs, and the conduct of Savonarola in respect to the excommunications, which are made subject of complaint against him by Bayle and others, were of a date nearly ten years later than this of the remarkable sermon preached in Brescia in 1484.

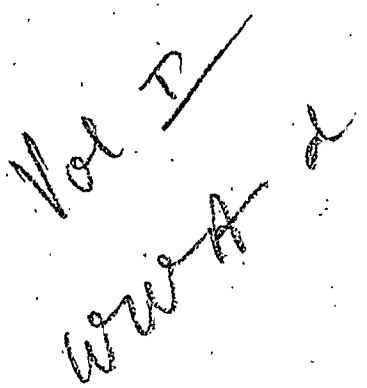
On this important question of Savonarola's guilt or innocence of the charge of imposture in respect to the revelation he de-

clared in his sermon in Brescia to have been made to him, must depend the issue of the reader's judgment on the character and fame of the subject of this work.

It is therefore necessary to know what those effects are of mental prayer to which Burlamacchi makes reference; what is the nature of those supernatural influences to which other persons, eminent for sanctity, have laid claims, and how are they to be distinguished from simulated communion with the spiritual world? and in a succeeding chapter, on the Discernment of Spirits, those enquiries will be considered.

In the beginning of 1490, Fra Girolamo was sent by his superiors to Genoa, to preach the Lent there, and after the performance of this duty, his return to Florence was decided on.

He was now about to enter on the most important labours of his mission in that place, which was henceforth to be the scene of them.



CHAPTER IV.

THE MISSION OF SAVONAROLA.

"There is no discipline, no fear of God in them (who should maintain it). Many believe in no God. The chastity of the cloister is slain, and they who should serve God with holy zeal, have become cold or lukewarm. The princes openly exercise tyranny. Their subjects encourage them in their cruel propensities, their rapine, their adulteries, their sacrileges.

"But after the corrupted human race has abused for so many ages the patience of God, then, at last, the divine justice appears, demanding that the rulers of the people, who with base examples corrupt all others, should be brought to a severe account, and that the people of Asia and Africa, now dwelling in the darkness of ignorance, should be made partakers of the light." *Ser. of Savon. at Brescia, in* 1485.

SOCRATES, before his judges, mainly rested his defence on the general character of his conduct in private life. He was known, he said, to love justice, and to reverence the God from whom all truth and justice emanated.

Hating injustice as he did, and holding falsehood as he had done in great abhorrence, he had avoided the contentions of public life, but never shirked an opportunity of contending for the truth, and for justice, that presented itself in his own immediate sphere of action. Though his judges were to free him on condition of his abandoning that course of life, he would say to them—"O, Athenians, I honour and love you, but I shall obey God rather than you; and as long as I breathe and am able, I shall not cease studying philosophy, and exhorting you, and warning any of you I may happen to meet, saying as I have been accustomed to do,—O best of men (seeing you are Athenians), of a city the most powerful and renowned for wisdom and strength, are you not ashamed of being careful for riches? how you may acquire them in greatest abundance? and

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also for glory and honour, and care not, and take not any thought for wisdom and truth, and for your soul, how it may be made most perfect.* . . .

"Perhaps, however, it may appear absurd, that I, going about thus, advise you in private, and make myself busy, but never venture to present myself in public before your assemblies, and give advice to the city. The cause is this, which you have often, and in many places, heard me mention, because *I am moved by a certain divine and spiritual influence*, which also Mellitus, through mockery, has set out in this indictment. This began with me from childhood, being a kind of voice, which, when present, always diverts me from what I am about to do, but never urges me on. This it is which opposed my meddling in public politics, and it appears to me to have opposed me very properly. For be well assured, O Athenians, if I had long since intermeddled with politics, I should have perished long ago, and should not at all have benefitted you or myself. And be not angry with me for speaking the truth. For it is not possible that any man should be safe who sincerely opposes either you or any other multitude, and who prevents many unjust and illegal actions from being committed in a city; but it is necessary that he who in earnest contends for justice, if he will be safe but for a short time, should live privately, and take no part in public affairs."†

Socrates was assuredly in some degree under the dominion of "that certain divine and spiritual influence" of which he speaks, when "the kind of voice," which began to be heard by him from childhood, breathed those thoughts into his soul.

His mission was to proclaim great truths, to inculcate philosophy, to elevate and purify men's thoughts, and his proper sphere was the school and the academic grove. He thought, while his labours for humanity were performed within those limits, his life and liberty were safe.

And in that opinion he was mistaken. Savonarola's mission

* Plato's Works, Trans. by Cary. Apol of Socrat. *Bohn's ed.* vol. i. p. 17.

† Ibid. p. 19.

was to proclaim the highest of all truths, to inculcate the most divine of all philosophy—but it extended farther—it imposed the necessity of declaring open war with those who had brought scandals on that divine philosophy, and had become false to its interests, and were at open enmity with the author of it. His teaching was not to be clothed in mystic language, comprehensible only to the higher order of intelligence. The sphere of his mission was not in private places, surrounded by ingenuous youths and literary sages, the elite of the society of a great city.

His mission had to be preached in the pulpit, publicly and plainly; his exhortations had to be articulately spoken to the multitude, to the rulers and the ruled, to young and old, the learned and the illiterate, to politicians who perverted religion for purposes of state, and to spiritual chiefs who converted sacred things and offices to purposes of gain.

There is a great moral in the lesson of the life and death of Girolamo Savonarola, which deeply concerns the interests of Christianity, the interests of the members of all churches, the interests temporal and eternal of all men who believe in the Gospel, and think that divine revelation was intended to promote the good of all grades of society, to advance the glory of God, to separate His Church from the worship of mammon, and to preserve religion from all corrupting influences and connexions inimical to its purity, simplicity, and independence.

There perhaps never was a period in the history of man, when a more general feeling prevailed throughout Christendom than at the present time, that the purity of religion, and the preservation of it from degrading influences, are matters of the highest importance to mankind.

It seems to be generally felt by the Christian world, that religion has been too long and too closely connected with the state; that it has been protected by it principally and primarily for political purposes, and that the protection it has afforded has not been beneficial to religion, to morality, or even to the civil rights of the people of any country where the Church has been thus connected and enslaved.

There is evidence, in fact, forced on us in every direction, that Christianity revolts at the results of that connexion, and will not endure a continuation of the evil.

Nothing is found to have accrued from it calculated to advance the interests of humanity, to spiritualize and to elevate men in the scale of beings destined for immortality, and intended here for progressive amelioration in their condition, moral and intellectual.

The old idea of regenerating nations by abolishing or discrediting religion, has been acted on by nearly all the continental revolutionists; and their efforts have failed of success, and the latest failures have been more signally unsuccessful than their earliest attempts.

A feeling generally prevails in the minds of all thinking persons, though it does not frequently find expression in our political or polemical literature, that the influences of mammon over mind and spirit, in these latter times, are becoming too potent for mere secular education to counteract: that the idolatry of wealth is producing a demoralizing influence on society, shutting out all that is ennobling in religion from man's view, chaining down all energies of the mind and body to the promotion of mere material interests, introducing a black heathenism into the heart of civilization, associating all forces for the concentration of capital in the hands of a monied aristocracy, and for repressing all liberties that are not favourable to the interests and the objects of the worshippers of mammon.

A strong conviction has come on the minds of vast numbers of reflecting people, that no other antagonist can be brought against this enormous power than that of religion, unconnected with the state and uncontaminated by it.

It will not do for the members of one church to proclaim this doctrine for the repression of the injustice of another, which is exercised at their expense, while they are content themselves to have their own ecclesiastical system peculiarly favoured, protected, and exclusively endowed, by a civil government.

If the doctrine be good in the case of any one particular

church, of the necessity for the independence of religion, the separation of the clergy from political cares, from state influences, and pecuniary obligations to governments, the support of all churches to the voluntary contributions of those who belong to them, and the full and unfettered right of every church to carry out its own ecclesiastical government without any interference of the civil power,—then it is desirable that the doctrine should be adopted by all churches.

The interests of religion, rightly understood, and those of liberty and of civilization, are identical.

The government of the Church, and the administration of the civil power, are separate concerns, with separate duties and responsibilities.

The highest crime against God, we are told by theologians, is that of simony. The greatest punishment of that sin, it would appear from the history of the times of which this work treats, is the corruption of the ministers of religion. And the greatest evils that can arise from tyrannical government, is the aid which abused temporal power derives from corrupted spiritual authority, in alliance with the state.

Of all men of singular mark and exalted merit, eminently great and good, master-spirits of their age and country, who have left the stamp of their genius and originality on the time and clime in which they flourished—none have suffered so much injustice from their cotemporaries, or have had so much wrong done to their memories in after-ages, as the eloquent, bold, uncompromising preacher of Gospel truth, the undaunted denouncer of all unchristian courses in high places, of all abuses in his Church, in its court, and in religious orders—the Dominican friar of Ferrara, Girolamo Savonarola, who suffered death in Florence, in the year of our Lord 1498.

A large portion of the learned, and, alas! the religious world, with few exceptions, either are unacquainted with his works, or knowing them at the hands of compilers or critics having no sympathies with his opinions, hold the author either in suspicion or contempt, or abhorrence.

Fra Girolamo figures in a variety of categories. He is a heretic with some, a fanatic with others, a sacerdotal demagogue with many, a reformer of a suspicious character with several.

He appears to have been considered an amiable and pious enthusiast by a great many, alas! by great numbers of our literary people of note, as one verging on insanity, whom it might have been better to have shut up in an asylum for the insane, than to have strangled and then burnt at a stake, on account of his alleged extravagances.

With a few, however, who have read some of his works, and not read of them only, but who have tracked out in the mine of history the small vein of truth regarding this man, that runs through the notices of his cotemporaries, of his career and its termination—who have no purpose to serve but to find out the truth, and to tell it, utterly irrespective of its bearings on the unhappy polemics of our times—Savonarola holds the character of a great Christian hero.

He appears to have been raised up by Providence at a crisis more terrible and perilous, perhaps, than any that has preceded or has followed it, to cry out against the iniquities that damaged and endangered his Church, and to combat with the enemies within its gates, and those that beset its altars and its throne.

The intrepid Dominican preached incessantly on the calamities of the Church, against the chief and heads of the clergy, to whom he ascribed them; predicted that religion would be renewed, and prayed for that renewal with all the fervour of a man whose soul was absorbed in that one object.

The Medici, in their turn, and their adherents, denounced what they deemed fanaticism, licentiousness, and democratic doctrines in the pulpit: they made war on Savonarola. They first egged on the money traffickers of Florence, the Lombards having banking interests to protect, against the divine who denounced their usurious practices. They then set the Franciscan monks of Florence against the Dominican—pulpit was pitted against pulpit, preacher was excited against preacher. Religion was dragged into the service of politics, and the ministers of

peace were engaged in mortal conflict with the characters and the orthodoxy of the faith of one another.

Savonarola's denunciations against the abuses in the Church, and the scandal of the life of Alexander the Sixth, were answered with imputations on his own faith, and accusations of all kinds against him, in all his relations, both public and private.

The reader will bear in mind that Savonarola's vehement predication of the necessity for the renovation of the Church, this continuous cry de Planctu Ecclesiæ, was from the time of the elevation of Alexander the Sixth to the Pontifical throne, to the latter part of 1498.

When Savonarola began to call for a remedy for the calamities of the Church, he, a young Dominican Friar, then about thirty-eight years of age, there was a German boy, in a small town of Saxony, who was destined one day to become an Augustinian Friar, and in the course of less than a quarter of a century, to make, not a reform of the Church, but a revolution. If Savonarola's cry for a salutary reform of abuses had not been silenced, by a great crime against justice, against Heaven and humanity, perhaps that revolution might not have taken place.

The labours of Savonarola were not limited to the spiritual interests of the people; the material interests of the poor, and the civil rights of his fellow-citizens, were the frequent objects of his solicitude. His successes were not confined to his triumphs as a preacher, a director of studies, a theologian, an exponent of mysteries, an interpreter of Scripture, a denouncer of the abuses in the court of Rome, a rebuker of Alexander the Sixth of unhappy memory, and the Cardinal Princes of his court, a bewailer of the calamities of the Church, eventually a prophet of evil to Italy, of good success to the French sovereign, of discomfiture to the family of the Medici, and their ally, the Roman Pontiff.

He took a part in favour of the Florentine people, and of their republic, against the aristocracy and the merchants who were princes there; and for the first time in the world since Apostolic days, at least, he preached up, and successfully for a long time, a solemn league and covenant between the rights of

the people and the interests of religion; between civil liberty and Church government; between the people and the priesthood; between civilization and Christianity.

This grand idea to have alone conceived was a merit which should entitle the memory of Savonarola to eternal honour; to the gratitude, even, of Mazzini and his associates, if peradventure they loved the liberty of Italy more than they hated the name of Priests and of Religion.

A man has to expect not much quiet in this world, who has fixed principles of truth, integrity, and justice, which he will not swerve from, in any trial of his virtue; who is ready at all times, and at all hazards, to uphold these principles; who is firm in his belief in the goodness and justice of God; who is faithful to the interests of humanity, free from all selfishness and fear, and reliant on the Divine protection.

Men of exalted religious sentiments, of heroic purposes, of a nature that revolts at hypocrisy, and at meanness and worldliness, as well as impiety; men so constituted, thrown on bad times, and amongst people divested of all spiritual influences, have great wars to wage, many mighty difficulties to contend with, unscrupulous enemies to provoke, powerful interests to offend, and unceasing efforts to depreciate, discredit, and defame them, to encounter.

A reformer, destined and qualified to attempt and to achieve great things, to leave the impress of his opinions on the minds of his countrymen, and on those of people in other lands, hundreds of years after his death, is to be known not by the reports alone of his cotemporaries, or the results even of the mission that had been apparently assigned to him, apart from a full knowledge of the times in which his lot had been cast, and his fortunes had been thrown for good or evil, and those preceding times also, in which the relations of Church and State underwent vicissitudes that influenced succeeding ages.

CHAPTER V.

SAVONAROLA'S RETURN TO FLORENCE.—THE SCENE OF HIS FUTURE LABOURS AT THE INSTANCE OF LORENZO DE MEDICI. —RE-APPEARANCE IN THE PULPIT; SIGNAL SUCCESS THERE. —PREDICTED CALAMITIES OF ITALY.—BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE WITH PAGANISM, IN ART, LITERATURE, AND RELIGION. 1490.

"In quâ Ego nactus, ut mihi videbar, locum resecandæ libidinis et coercendæ Juventutis, vehemens fui, atque omnes prpfudi vires animi atque ingenii mei, non odio adductus alicujus, sed spe reipublicæ corrigendæ et sanandæ civitatis. Afflicta est Respublica!

CIC. *Epist. ad Attic.* l. i. Ep. 18.

A LARGE field was required for the mission of Savonarola. The unimportant towns and small cities in which the communities of his order were located throughout Lombardy and Tuscany, which had been the theatres of his recent missionary labours, afforded not a sufficient scope for the exercise of his extraordinary gifts, and great zeal for the salvation of souls. Accident seemed to have led to his being sent in the year 1485, by his superiors, to assist at a chapter-general of the congregation of Lombardy, in Reggio, for the discussion and regulation of various matters of discipline of the Dominican order.

Many learned laymen and theologians of various orders assisted at that chapter. The acts of this assembly make special mention of Fra Girolamo Savonarola. Among the learned laymen who came there to hear the discussions, was the celebrated John Pico, Count of Mirandola—one of the most learned men of his age—uncle of John Francis Pico, of Mirandola, the biographer of Fra Girolamo.

The Count, who happened to be at Reggio on some business at the time of the chapter, had probably heard of the signal

gifts and graces which rumour had already begun to ascribe to Savonarola.

All that is known with certainty of his attendance at the chapter-general of Reggio is, that it procured for Savonarola the friendship of that prodigy of learning, and eminently pious person; and on the return of the Count to the court of Florence, ultimately caused Lorenzo de Medici, the Magnificent, to signify to the prior of San Marco his wish to have Savonarola called to Florence, and permanently established there.

It was not, however, till the year 1490, at the repeated solicitations of the Count, that Savonarola was at length sent to Florence, and established in the convent of San Marco, in the office of "Master of sciences, and instructor of the community in the ways of the Lord."*

Let the reader picture to himself the monk who had withdrawn from Florence upwards of seven years previously, so discouraged by his failure in the pulpit as to be hopeless of ever appearing again there as a preacher, now, in his thirty-eighth year, turning his steps to the same city in obedience to his superiors, fully conscious that mighty labours were before him, that he was charged with a great mission and must perform the duties of it, and with a presentiment in his mind that nothing could remove, that he must die in the discharge of them in that very city to which he was now wending his way on foot, after recent illness, and in a debilitated state, in the fierce heats of summer.

Let the reader follow the poor Dominican on his weary route to the village of Pianora, near Bologna, and mark his worn look, how he yields to the fatigue, exhaustion, and indisposition with which he is overpowered; and finding that he is wholly unable to proceed on his journey, lays himself down on the road side; how it seems as if the hand of God was bringing his career to a sudden close. And then let the reader be reminded that Providence had other designs in regard to that weary man lying before him in apparent extremity, by the appearance of a stranger, unex-

* Sommario della Vitá, par Rians, p. 19.

pectedly approaching, bending over the exhausted traveller, and, like the good Samaritan, performing for him acts of mercy and much-needed kindness—raising him from the ground—aiding him to walk to an adjacent place of entertainment—there helping him with his own hand with such restoratives as he required—then setting out with him when he finds himself sufficiently refreshed and strengthened—and accompanying him even to the gates of Florence, and there parting with him, *recommending him to accomplish the mission which was given him by God.*

Burlamacchi says, the words addressed to Fra Girolamo—"Fa che tu faoci quello, perchè sei mandato da Dio"—were no sooner spoken than the stranger disappeared, and was seen no more by Savonarola. This account, says Burlamacchi, was given by Fra Bartholomeo de Faenza, a man of great sanctity, and who twice was Vicar-general of the congregation of Tuscany, which account he said was given to him by Fra Girolamo himself. This Fra Bartholomeo was of such a reputation in his time, that Pietro Sodereni, Gonfalionieri Perpetual of Florence, proposed him to Julius the Second for the archbishopric of the city.*

The monk who left Florence, in poor estimation with his brethren of San Marco in 1482, came back in 1490, with a great prestige for sanctity and proficiency in the sacred sciences.

The Florentines received him with manifestations of joy and satisfaction. And we are told their surprise was wonderful, at observing how great a change had taken place in his deportment, demeanour, voice, and gesture. A gracious sweetness, that seemed to them ineffable, had spread over his features, and extended to his mode of speaking, and to his mien and manners.

His instructions to the community in the sacred sciences and the Scriptures, were usually given in the garden of the convent, from a small chapel in the centre, and were attended by a vast concourse of people of distinction in the city, of the court, and of the schools of learning and of art.

The intellect and piety of Florence were taken as if by storm

* Bur. Vita. de Sav. Mis. Baluzii, tom. i. p. 535.

by the irresistible eloquence of Fra Girolamo. His *renommèe* extended not only over Florence, but reached even to Rome itself.

At length he was prevailed on by the prior of San Marco, Fra Domingo de Ferrara, to deliver his lectures in the church.

This was in the middle of the year 1490. Not without agitation and manifest trouble of mind did he ascend the pulpit once more in Florence, and address the largest audience he had ever seen congregated in a church up to that period. He seemed for some minutes to be absorbed in deep and solemn thought—he then proceeded with his discourse, and after another solemn pause, and apparent meditation on things of high importance, he said, calmly and distinctly, "I will preach in the church to-morrow, and I will continue thus to do for the space of eight years."

This was in the middle of 1490; in the spring of 1498 he was to put to death.*

About this period, the biographers of Savonarola make mention of various supernatural intimations made to devout people, confirmatory of the opinion that began to prevail at this time, that Fra Girolamo was eminently favoured by God, and endowed with great spiritual gifts.

With these accounts I think it unnecessary to trouble the readers of the Life of Savonarola, though neither discrediting them wholly, nor doubting the trustworthiness of Burlamacchi, or of Mirandola, when they speak of their own knowledge of matters they narrate, or that had been related to them by Savonarola.

Omitting, then, such relations, except in a single instance, which seems to me connected in an important way with the history of Savonarola's revelation, I will merely observe, that in all ages, when the pre-eminent sanctity of any person has been accompanied by generally accredited illumination of the spirit, exhibited in visions or revelations, or when such sanctity has been supposed by others to be so accompanied, there is always a great tendency in the public mind to dispose the mental fa-

* Hist. de Sav. par M. Piget Carle, p. 106.

culties in such a manner, that they may be prepared to give every admission to evidence that passing events at all out of the common course of things may seem to confirm, and thus corroborate the prevailing opinion of the existence of those special manifestations of spiritual illumination to which I have referred. There is, in short, a disposition to confirm accounts of this sort by all kinds of testimony, and it requires much discrimination and judgment to examine the evidence, and sift the statements of attesting persons, and to separate facts from impressions of them.

Burlamacchi says, "There was a priest of Florence, of noble family, named Prospero Pitti, a canon of the cathedral church, a doctor of the civil and canon law, a man of a most holy life, and accounted highly favoured by God, and in the possession even of the gift of prophecy. He was especially given to the study of the Sacred Scriptures, and in such veneration did he hold them, that when he studied them he always knelt down, and remained kneeling before the crucifix, praying and meditating. He gave to the poor all his revenue over and above the bare amount that served to provide the necessaries of life for him, and with charity he administered the word of God and the Holy Sacraments to his flock. Long before Savonarola's time, in Florence, he predicted the downfall of the Medici, the judgments on Italy, and the renovation of the Church.

"And he predicted also to Zanobi Acciajoli, sixteen years before his arrival in Italy, that he would not continue to wear the secular habit of a secular priest, but would be received into the Dominican order; as in effect it came to pass, when he was invested with the habit in the convent of San Marco, at the hands of Fra Girolamo. He states, that before the renovation of the Church, there would be seen a large crucifix of a red colour in the air, and many other miraculous signs; after which, the Turks would be converted, which things would happen after those signs had been seen from the mountains of Apulia, and then the church would be renewed, and all Italy would be destroyed 'disbrutta;' foretelling also, the advent of a pontiff of an angelic character.

"He said also, that he had prayed God to send many preachers to prepare people for the judgments to come, and, in particular, he foretold that one should come,—a prophet of the order of preachers,—who should accomplish great things in Florence, and after much fruit would be obtained by his labours, that his death would happen. On one occasion, the morning of Holy Saturday, this excellent ecclesiastic, Messèr Prospèro Pitti, coming to the church to hear a sermon, no sooner caught the sound of the voice of the preacher, who happened to be Savonarola, as he was repeating those words—'gladius domini super terram cito et velociter,' than he drooped his head, and with his face covered with his two hands, he remained in profound meditation for some minutes, and then said to his nephew, Carlo Pitti, who was sitting beside him, '*That preacher is the holy prophet of whom I spake to you ten years ago.*'"*

Here we have a prior claim to Savonarola's, by a term of ten years, to the gift of prophecy, in relation to the calamities that were about to fall on Italy, and likewise the renovation of the Church.

If to the calamities occasioned by the invasion of Italy by Charles the Eighth of France, be added the misfortunes occasioned by the ravages of Cæsar Borgia, the language ascribed to the canon Prospero Pitti, in speaking of the miserable condition to which Italy was to be reduced, would not be too strong.

Taking into consideration the whole history of the times, their terrible evils, and the outrages against humanity and religion that were then perpetrated habitually and with impunity, the judgments of heaven might have been anticipated by men exercising their reason only in relation to those times; and by men eminently spiritual and sanctified, those judgments may have been made obvious to the inward sense of consciousness, that, when illuminated by God, is endowed with powers of sight that are capable of penetrating into futurity, far beyond the range of outward vision.

But though there is nothing in the account given by Burla-

* Burlamacchi, Vita Savon. p. 534.

macchi, of the supernatural gifts of the canon Pitti, that may not be possibly authentic, and probably founded on some actual truths; we cannot admit the evidence which Burlamacchi has adduced in support of the truth of the canon's relation, respecting his previous knowledge of Savonarola's prophetic character. Burlamacchi rests satisfied with establishing the trustworthiness of the canon by whom the revelations were made. But he forgets that the testimony of the nephew of Pitti is of no less importance than the uncle's. For it is evidently from the nephew's report that the uncle's statement is derived by Burlamacchi, and yet he gives no account whatever of the character of the latter, and never takes into consideration the question of his credibility, so entirely pre-occupied he appears to have been with the idea of the uncle's sanctity and great fame for piety.

The calamities connected with the invasion of Italy by Charles the Eighth of France, are alleged to have been predicted, not only in Florence by Pitti and Savonarola, but in Naples also by different persons.

St. Vincent of Aquila, of the order of St. Francis, who died in 1504, an ascetic of singular piety and zeal for God's honour, who lived in the practice of astonishing austerities, is said by Rohrbacher to have "possessed the gift of prophecy, and to have foretold to Ferdinand of Arragon, king of Naples, the ravages which Charles the Eighth of France would make in his kingdom; and had predicted, also, the loss of a battle, which, against his advice, Ferdinand had fought with the army of the Pope, Innocent the Eighth."*

Another prediction of the same calamities of Italy, which Savonarola proclaimed, connected with the invasion of Italy by Charles the Eighth, the defeat of King Ferdinand of Arragon, the sovereign of Naples, and his expulsion from his kingdom by the French, was made public about 1494 in Naples, and attracted the attention of the most learned men of Naples, and especially of Alexander ab Alexandro, and also of Jovianus Pontanus.

* Rohrbacher, tome xxii. p. 278.

The prediction I refer to, was ascribed to St. Cathaldus, a native of Ireland, who flourished in the latter half of the seventh century.* He was born in Munster, and had been Bishop of Ratheny, or Rashchait, near Lismore. Like other Irish ecclesiastics of his age, eminent for learning and piety, he visited Rome, eventually settled in the kingdom of Naples, and became Bishop of Tarrento, in which see he died, leaving a holy name and a great memory behind him. Dempster, the unscrupulous claimant of the renown of all itinerant Irish saints, on behalf of Scotland, made a booty of this celebrated Irish prelate, and gave Archbishop Usher the trouble of rescuing the stolen episcopal property of Ireland, in the birth-place, sanctity, and scholarship of St. Cathaldus, from the martyrology of Dempster's beatified Scotchmen.

Alexander ab Alexandro, a celebrated Neapolitan and jurist, a cotemporary of Savonarola, born in 1461, and deceased in Rome in 1523, in his *Geniales Dies*, lib. iii., gives a singular account of the prediction above referred to, in the following words:

"While Ferdinand the First, of Arragon, was yet flourishing in prosperity, and the city and kingdom of Naples were free from the calamities of war, it is well known that the holy man, St. Cathaldus, who was Bishop of Tarrento a thousand years before that time, and whose memory the people of Tarrento still honour and reverence, on a tempestuous night appeared in his sleep to a priest, exercising the sacred functions and brought up in holiness of life, on two occasions, and admonished him there was a book written by him, which, while living, he had secreted in a hidden place, and in which book some secrets of a divine nature were written, which was to be dug up by him, and when found, was to be immediately carried by him to the king.

"He, thinking it was only a dream, and having paid no attention to it, one morning early, after rising, going into the church, Cathaldus himself appeared to him, as he had been in this life,

* Lannigan's Ec. Hist. vol. iii. p. 121.

in his episcopal robes; and declared to him, that if another day should pass over his head without his making the necessary excavation in the secret place pointed out, in search of the book written by him, and bringing the same to the King, he should suffer a grievous punishment.

"The next morning, with solemn pomp, the priest, accompanied by a number of people, proceeded to the indicated place of concealment, where for so many ages the book had been deposited. And there, inscribed on leaden tables, it was found, as it is well known, in a coffer fastened with nails.

"In this writing, it is certain, the future destruction of the kingdom, the miseries, calamities, and lamentable times, and the impending evils which afterwards followed, were foretold to the king; and which were seen by us, and of which we had experience dearly purchased.

"And such divine virtue was there in that prediction, that not long after, Ferdinand, either by the wrath of heaven, or the uncontrollable decrees of destiny, at the very commencement of the war died, and Charles, King of the French, invaded the kingdom with a large army; and Alphonzo, the eldest son of Ferdinand, who had succeeded to the throne after his father's death, having basely fled his kingdom, died in exile. And presently, a young son of Ferdinand, a youth of great promise in all studies, of wonderful proficiency, the next heir to the kingdom, involved in a calamitous and fatal war, in the flower of his age, was cut off by a premature death. Afterwards, the French and the Spaniards, uniting in a joint claim to the possession of the kingdom, on the flight of Frederic, another son of Ferdinand (by a prior marriage), who had succeeded to the kingdom, they invaded Naples with a numerous army, and took possession of all things, sacred and profane. They made a division of all property between them. Towns, villas, streets, were filled with slaughter, and many of those slain had suffered the most revolting indignities.

"The villages and hamlets were made scenes of carnage and rapine, and the provinces that had been at all hostile were

devastated and reduced to the last extremity, by fire, and sword, and lust. And if any thing could have exceeded such calamities, it was the wretched fate of the king, not yet deprived of life by so many misfortunes, after his house had been overturned, such carnage had taken place in the towns of his kingdom, he himself cast forth from it, with his wife and children, leaving their homes and fortunes in the hands of their enemies: their country finally exhausted with disease and pestilence, and its strength so wasted that to the present time, in which we live, we have hardly yet ceased to tremble, or have arrived at the knowledge whether or not we have yet endured sufficient sufferings and punishments."*

The preceding account is given by Alexander, for the purpose of shewing that "the Almighty is accustomed, when any divine judgment is impending over kingdoms, fraught with evils, dire or adverse to mankind, to make the future manifest by portents and prodigies, and to foreshow the coming calamities by other signs less obvious in the heavens; and these have been made known to us, and the relation of them has been given to us by credible authors."

There is a species of literary imposture, that opens up a very curious subject of inquiry and of study in the history, "Des egarements de l'esprit humain," namely, the fabrication of inscribed metallic plates, and slabs of stone, and tablets of wood or ivory, purporting to be ancient documents, either historical, or sepulchral, or religious; the depositing of the same in ancient ruins, in tombs, or churches, and the pretended discovery of them in times of panic in the public mind, or on emergencies of a private nature affected by passing events, for purposes of gain or for the sake of notoriety, or from motives which are influenced by some peculiar tendencies in the minds of such impostors, bordering on insanity.

I am afraid the alleged discovery of the inscribed metallic plates, purporting to record a prediction of St. Cathaldus, which

* Alexander Ab Alexandro, Geniales Dies, tom. 2. lib. iii. p. 734. 12mo. *Lug. Bat.* 1673.

was made by the saint, of events that occurred, not 1,000 years, as Alexander, the jurist, states, but eight centuries and a half after his death, must pass into the category of "Pious Frauds,"* and that the author of it must be content with the unenviable notoriety for his name, of a place in the same page of history with that which records the name of the inscriber of the stone discovered at Murviedo, in Spain, about 1630, by certain persons searching for an ancient tomb, of which there was some tradition, with an inscription in these words:

"This is the tomb of Adoniram, the servant of King Solomon, who came to collect the tribute, and who died the day . . ." or that of the fabricator of the plates of gold, found in a tomb in the church of Saint Sophia, in Constantinople, written, as we are assured by that grave narrator of strange things, Sir John Mandeville, "in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin letters," predicting the advent of the Messiah, and which "lay in the earth two thousand years before our Lord was born," and, as "they say," so inscribed "by Hermogenes, the wise man:" and with those other names of modern contrivers of "ingenious devices"—Annius of Viterbo, McPherson, Roger O'Connor, and Joseph Smith, the apostle of the Mormons.

In this instance, Bayle might have afforded to have been perfectly fair, without disadvantage to his peculiar opinions. But, with his accustomed bad faith whenever a question was at issue which at all affected the interests of religion or its ministers, he threw in all the weight of his criticism against the authenticity of the account given by Alexander, but he did not quote the brief but most important relation given by that author, while he quoted the passages at full length of those who took opposite views of this affair. He has not put the subject fairly before his readers.

The main question for them is, the authority of the two principal cotemporary narrators of this matter, and the greater degree of credit that is due to one of them.

* "The prophecy (says Lannigan) attributed to St. Cathaldus, is evidently a forgery made up on the occasion of those troubles."—*Eccles. Hist. of Ireland*, vol. iii. p. 123. 8vo. *Dub.* 1822.

Pontanus, a celebrated scholar, an astrologer, a poet, and historian—a cotemporary and a countryman of Alexander Ab Alexandro, who died in 1503, and of whom Erasmus speaks as being equal to Cicero in the elegance and dignity of his style—treats at some length of this alleged prediction of St. Cathaldus.

He states that the priest who figured in this business was a Spanish friar, ill instructed, but bold in the pulpit, and a pretender to celestial communications. He had endeavoured ineffectually to induce Ferdinand to banish the Jews out of Naples, and then adopted the plan in question to work on his fears. He engraved some words on a leaden plate, which he made St. Cathaldus author of, and buried it, and after three years, having suborned a priest to pretend to a communication with the Saint, caused it to be dug up. The words were enigmatical, and pointed to the extirpation of Judaism; but the king was enjoined not to read the printing, except with the assistance of a very virtuous servant. The king, suspecting the cheat, did not employ the monk to decipher it. The latter was incensed, and raised a clamour which spread over all the states of Italy.

Goulart, in his edition of the works of Camerarius,* gives forty-two French verses, purporting to be a translation of the prophecy of Cathaldus, wherein the French poet makes the Saint who menaced Ferdinand with such awful evils, promise some future king of France all kinds of blessings.

Anthony Caraccioli published a Chronology, in which he says, the plates were dug out of the ground in 1494, in which the sudden death of the king was spoken of, and that the king soon after died.

Ferdinand certainly died that year, but other writers state the digging up of the leaden box took place in 1492; at all events, the evils foretold in the writings did occur, and the death also within a period of two years.

Savonarola made his first appearance in the pulpit of San Marco, after his return to Florence as a preacher, on Sunday,

* Hist. Camerarii, p. 48, Ap. Bayle, art. Catil.

the 1st of August, 1490. His previous appearance there was as a lecturer, rather than a pulpit orator. On the occasion above referred to, he commenced a course of expositions of the Apocalypse, and the numbers of people who flocked to the church were quite unprecedented. There must have been something in the manner, style, and matter of his sermons of no ordinary description, for the city became agitated by the earnest discussions that were entered into in all directions concerning the new preacher and his doctrine.

"At this time," says Burlamacchi, "there arose great diversity of opinions and contradictions in the city (on the subject of Fra Girolamo's preaching), some saying that he was simple and well-intentioned—some that he was learned, but very designing—many that he gave credence to false and absurd visions, as even it had been said of Christ: 'Quia bonus est, alii autem non, sed seducit turbas.' There were three propositions that he especially enforced and endeavoured to impress on the minds of the people:—

"The first was, that the Church of God had to be renewed—'*renovato*,' and that in our times.

"The second was, that all Italy would be visited by God's wrath—'*flagellato*.'

"The third was, that all the things predicted would speedily come to pass—'*Sarebbono presto*.'

"Which things he satisfactorily shewed were to be expected, by argument and resting on the authority of the Holy Scriptures, abstaining then from further reference to visions, the people not appearing much disposed to give credence to them. But, in course of time, observing better disposition in his audience, he began to disclose some revelations, but in the form of parables and metaphors. Then the exceedingly disturbed and divided state of public opinion becoming daily more manifest, reflection made him apprehensive and timid, and he resolved to preach no more in the same style. But, nevertheless, every other subject that he studied or read dissatisfied him, and when he preached on other matters, he became still more discontented with his

labours, and finally he felt his being, as it were, a burden to himself. Wherefore, commencing a series of sermons the first day of the Septuagint, 1490, in the church of the D'Uomo, in the first week having preached sufficiently on future events, he purposed on the following week to abandon that subject, and to preach on it no more. But, throughout the succeeding Saturday and the night of that day, he could not by any possible efforts apply his mind to other subjects, finding the way to every other consideration closed, and this one alone (of the revelations) open to him.

"The morning came, and found him, after the long mental conflict during a sleepless night, wearied in mind and body; and in this state he heard a voice saying to him,—'Foolish man that thou art! Dost thou not see that it is the will of God that thou shouldst preach in the appointed manner?' And thus aroused, he immediately felt restored to himself; and shortly after ascended the pulpit, and preached a most admirable and wonderfully effective sermon."*

In the same year, 1490, Fra Girolamo was appointed Prior of the convent of San Marco. It was now that his mission might be said in reality to commence. The pulpit was now at his command, the mode and matter of his sermons he could determine on for himself; he had no intimation to apprehend that offence had been taken at his reprobation of vice, or impiety, by important persons in the state or the Church, or by opulent citizens, by some friend of the convent, or some other influential party having relations with Lorenzo the Magnificent, or the nuncio, perhaps, at his court from the Eternal city, from the supreme Pontiff, Alexander the Sixth.

Our sympathies are enlisted on the side of youth and bravery, when exposed to peril; they are with the soldier, when he goes into battle; with the poor man, when he is engaged in unequal strife with the oppressor; with struggling virtue, striving to maintain its ground against villany, strong in the sense of its

* Burlamacchi, Vit. de Sav. p. 535.

own security, and the public favour that its former successes may have obtained for it.

Is there no sympathy for the mortal struggle of sanctity and spirituality with simony and sensuality, that is about to commence in Florence?

Is there no sympathy for the cause of Christian truth and purity, of civil and religious freedom, of the poor, of the oppressed of the fold of Christ, that is at stake, while "the True Monk," who is now the Prior of San Marco, is in the breach, assailing the citadel of corruption, battling with abuses, breaking down the defences of the enemy, driving back the forces of feudalism from their entrenchments, and confronting the proud merchants who are princes at their palace gates, and there risking every thing in this world, on the issue of a contest with Paganism in almost every Christian garb, and the philosophy of Plato substituted for that of Christ, in learning, art, education, morals, and religion?

Is there no sympathy in this world of ours for the single-minded champion of religion, this man of heroic virtue, in his dread contest with power and authority, wealth, sophistry, impiety, and wickedness?

It cannot be in respect to such a struggle, that the hearts of civilized people, of any Christian creed, can partake of the cold, ungenial feelings, or the ungenerous sentiments of animosity towards Savonarola which animated the breast of Bayle, the sneering enemy of the Christian faith, the unscrupulous opponent of every man who is found to be steadfast in it. We may confidently hope that the malignant critic, the creedless Bayle, who made this struggle and its victim subjects of the foulest slander, will cease to pass for an authority in the case of the life of Savonarola, or indeed of any man known to have been a firm believer in the Gospel.

CHAPTER VI.

ORIGIN OF THE CONVENT OF SAN MARCO, IN FLORENCE.—FRA GIROLAMO APPOINTED PRIOR.—BEGINNING OF THE MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN LORENZO DE MEDICI AND FRA GIROLAMO.—SCENES IN THE GARDEN OF SAN MARCO.—EFFORTS OF LORENZO TO GAIN OVER FRA GIROLAMO TO HIS INTERESTS.—PULPIT SET AGAINST PULPIT BY LORENZO.—DISSENSIONS OCCASIONED BY THE PREACHING OF RIVAL DOCTRINES.—1490 TO 1491.

"Beatus Joannis pictor moribus et pencillo
Angelici cognomen jure merito."
Inscription under Fra Angelico's Portrait.

"Would'st thou behold his monument? Look round,
And know that where we stand, stood oft and long,
Oft till the day was gone, Raphael himself....."
ROGERS'S *Italy.*

FLORENCE owes its interest chiefly to the reminiscences of its great men, the recollections of the stirring events of its romantic history, the association of ideas with every phase of its civilization, the recalled dramas of its public and its private life, solemn ceremonies and spirit-moving scenes, in its renowned churches, its Santo Croce, the time-honoured, venerable Duomo, the sacred edifice of San Marco, Santa Maria Novella, the scene of so many glorious efforts in the pulpit for the salvation of souls, on the part of Savonarola.

These reminiscences rather, than the grandeur of its public buildings, than any beauty or uniformity, spaciousness or commodity of its public streets, give to Florence that peculiar character of endearment with which it is regarded by strangers, and which seems to have something to do with veneration for the memories of her illustrious citizens.

The traveller who takes his stand in the public square in the vicinity of the Palazzo di Signori, and gazes around him at the different monuments connected with strange events and frightful catastrophes, which have occurred in the immediate neighbourhood of that place, the scene of so many stirring events in history, of a mingled yarn of horrors and of heroism, will have his notice directed to a structure more remarkable for the renown and fate of one who dwelt within its walls several centuries ago, than for any architectural advantages or external adornment. The Dominican Convent and Church of San Marco are before him. He may fix his eyes, perhaps, on those dark walls of the church, and sombre aspect of the convent, when the bright moon is shining on those ancient structures, making its dingy aspect almost beautiful. Fancy may then well exercise its powers in such a spot, clothe the shadows on those walls with flesh and blood, recall the storming of that convent, in 1498, with all its tumult, its clamour, its torch-lights flickering in the breeze, and the glare of their fierce blaze thrown over and anon on the horrid faces of a brutal rabble, maddened into frenzy by the desperate resistance of the inmates of that house, maintained during so many hours of the memorable night of the assault. And from this scene of external tumult, the mind may suffer itself to be transported to the now peaceful seclusion of the cloisters and the garden, and imagine he communes with that mysterious monk, Fra Girolamo Savonarola; with the beatified artist, Fra Angelico, of Fiesole; while the persons of Lorenzo de Medici, of Pico Mirandola, and of the obsequious Politian, may rise up in his memory, as if they had been given for a moment a sort of galvanic life and motion.

The convent of San Marco, in Florence, dates from the thirteenth century. The first stone was laid in 1299, in the pontificate of Boniface the Eighth. The house was destined for an order of ascetics of Vallombrosa, named Sylvestri. The relaxed discipline of this order in course of time was productive of so much scandal in Florence, that the Pope, Eugenius the Fourth, in 1436, deprived them of their convent, and appro-

priated San Marco to the uses of the Dominican congregation of Fiesole. The Medici from the earliest period of its existence had largely contributed to its embellishment and endowment, and very extensively, at different periods, to its enlargement and repairs.

The Medici, in fact, were the principal benefactors in Florence to the convent, church, and library of San Marco.

Cosmo de Medici, at his expense, built or restored the existing convent and library on the ruins of the old establishment.

Vincent del Migliore, a writer very eulogistic of the Medici, says, that the enormous sum of 10,000 florins of gold were spent by them on the reconstruction and adornment of San Marco.

But Padre Marchese says Cosmo expended 36,000 gold ducats on the building and repairs alone, in 1437 and the two following years. The church was magnificently painted in fresco—one of these, *the Annunciation*, by Cavallino, has escaped the ravages of time and war.

It was not till after 1451 that the convent and cloisters were finished, according to Marchese. The first cloisters and dormitories were painted by the famous Fra Angelico, about 1445.

The magnificent library was finished about the same time. The extreme length was eighty brachia long by eighteen wide. The ceiling was supported by a double row of pillars.

The convent and church of San Marco, adorned with the beautiful frescos of the blessed Angelico, the divinest painter of sacred subjects perhaps this world ever saw, a man whose seraphic spirit seemed to have communicated something of a celestial character to his spiritual compositions, constitute a gallery of sacred painting, and of monuments of Italian art, than which nothing more glorious exists elsewhere.

For a detailed account of those wonderful productions of Fra Angelico and his brother artists, I must refer my readers to the admirable work of Padre Marchese. I will only make a single extract on the subject of one of the most celebrated pictures of this great artist and most holy person—the Annunciation of the

blessed Virgin, in the upper dormitory, a sketch of which dormitory, with the outlines of this painting, will be found in Marchese's great work of San Marco. The figures in this fresco are represented somewhat less than life.

"On a superficies ten palms in length, he painted the habitation of our Lady, surrounded by a vestibule, which rests on Corinthian columns, much in the style of that which he executed at Cortona; and, though the perspective is not perfect, it is better than that of the former. On the outside is the little garden of Mary, enclosed by a thick hedge and railing; a figure employed by the Church to denote her unblemished virginity. The Holy Maiden of Nazareth is seated on an unadorned chair: the colour of her tunic is a pale red, her azure mantle in folds over her knees, her arms are crossed on her bosom, and her countenance, if not remarkable for great beauty, is resplendent with the calm serenity of Paradise. Her fair hair falls gracefully on her shoulders, and so humble and devotional is her whole attitude, that in the presence of this dear image, we almost feel the angelical salutation: 'Hail! full of grace,' trembling on our lips."*

Savonarola was no sooner made prior of San Marco, than he was informed it was a customary thing with the superiors of all convents in Florence, on their appointment to the office of prior, or head of their respective orders, to make a formal visit to Lorenzo de Medici, as a recognition of his legitimate authority in his capacity of the head of the Republic, and for the purpose of *recommending to his protection* their several convents.

The monk of Ferrara, who began, we are told, at this time to shew that he was ambitious, a self-seeker, looking after his own interests more than those of religion, if his character and conduct were rightly understood, ought to have been eager to make his court with the chief of the state, with him from whom all honour, wealth, and dignities in the republic were to be derived.

But we learn from Burlamacchi, "That Fra Girolamo would

* Marchese's Lives of Dominican Artists, translated by Rev. C. P. Meehan, vol. i. chap. vi. p. 218.

do none of those things (that he was informed were customary), but retiring as it were within himself, *he rendered thanks to God for that which had come to pass, and recommended to divine Providence the convent and himself;* of which purpose of his, having informed the brethren, they were very much surprised.

"Hence, the brethren of longest standing in the convent waited on him, saying: 'Father Prior, such being the custom in Florence, in accordance with it your reverence ought to make this customary visit of ceremony, otherwise a grave scandal will arise;' *to which observations he answered, 'Who has elected me Prior? God, or Lorenzo?*

"*To which question they replied, 'It was done by God.' Then he rejoined, 'It is my Lord, my God, whom I wish to thank, not mortal men.'* And, having thus spoken, he immediately arose. Lorenzo, on being apprised of what had taken place, felt much hurt at it, and complained of it to some of his friends, saying, 'A foreign friar is come to take up his abode in my house, and he will not even deign to make a visit to me.' Nevertheless, he did not refrain from trying various means to gain him over, and to have a good understanding with him—and sometimes feigning to come from motives of devotion to hear mass in the church of San Marco, he afterwards walked into the garden of the convent; and on such occasions, when the monks saw him, they used to run to the cell of the prior, and say to him, 'Father Prior, Lorenzo is in the garden,' and the usual answer was—'Has he asked for me?' Then being answered in the negative, he would rejoin—'Leave him then to walk about at his devotions;' and, thus answering, he would remain in his cell.

"It was the custom in the convent, when Lorenzo came there, for the principal brethren and the oldest of them to receive him as he entered the church and the convent, and, as he proceeded through them, to converse with him on such topics as were agreeable to him. But such things the good servant of God never would consent to do. But, on the contrary, he always fled and avoided, as he would the plague, the familiar acquaintance and conversation with the great of this world—*gli gran*

maestri—so that Lorenzo, who most acutely observed all things, remained very much perplexed about these matters. He thought, however, of another way of influencing him, namely, by corrupting him with presents. But, even by these means, he could not effect his purpose, though he had sent several times to make the offers of them to him.

The good father, notwithstanding all these efforts to conciliate him, did not refrain from preaching and reprehending impiety with all freedom, standing firmly by his own rights of gospel liberty.

Hence, in the pulpit, he was wont to say—"As a faithful dog always barked to defend his master's house, but, nevertheless, if robbers came, and, to stop the barking, threw a bone or some kind of food to the animal, the faithful dog took what was thrown and left it aside, but never ceased to bark and to attack the robber."

Lorenzo, seeing how matters went on, perceived that "this was not the soil in which to plant the vine of worldliness."

Still, he had recourse to another plan to effect a reconciliation; he caused several persons, of much importance and influence, secular and in religion, cautiously, and with tact, to persuade the prior of his friendship for him; but all these efforts were in vain—he withstood these attempts as a strong tower would resist all assaults upon it. Lorenzo, a man of great policy and judgment, seeing how the prior's reputation and influence augmented every day, felt very uneasy at this state of things. Finally, to leave no effort untried to tempt him (into terms), he wished to ascertain if the prior was covetous and greedy of money, and therefore placed a large sum of money, in crowns of gold, at the disposition of Pietro de Bibiena, his chancellor, to put in the alms box in the church of San Marco. When the time came to open the box, which was well known to Lorenzo, who stood a little way off in concealment, the prior and the brethren, according to custom, went to take out the alms, and finding there such a large number of crowns of gold, the prior made a partition, and, having separated the silver from the gold, he put

the latter in a purse, and said, this will serve for the wants and charities of the convent; but the crowns of gold, let them be taken to the good people of Saint Martin's institution, for appropriation among the poor, we having no need of so much money.*

The brethren wondered much at this, having already thought on different modes of expending the money usefully for the convent. But they raised no objection to his decision, on account of the great reverence they had for him. Lorenzo, at this proceeding, felt more surprised than ever at the singleness of purpose and simplicity of this friar.

Fra Girolamo continued preaching and reprehending vice in severe terms, and menacing Italy with tribulations, and declaring there would be shortly seen a tempest which would shake all things, and put an end to the sunshine and fine weather which were now enjoyed.

In times when great wickedness prevails, and virtue cannot move in defence of truth or justice without danger of persecution, we are told by pagan philosophy it is the part of a wise man to mind himself, and to leave truth and justice to take care of their own interests. Plato reasons thus, but not well, as Savoranola seemed to think:—

"Such a man, taking all these things into his consideration, living in quietness and tranquillity (like one who takes shelter when the storm is raging), occupied wholly in his own concerns, and seeing the world around him filled with all manner of iniquity, is contented to pass the time of his sojourning here in peace.†"

Many citizens were incensed at Savonarola's persistence in preaching as he did, and were excited to anger chiefly by the friars and their adherents, who were called Tepidi, who deeming that those things would displease Lorenzo, went to Fra Girolamo, and exhorted him to abandon this new style of preaching and return to the old.

* The charitable institution of the *Buonomini* di San Martino, the procurators of the poor who are ashamed to beg—poveri vergognosi—was instituted by Saint Antonino of Florence, in 1441.

† Plato, de Republica, vol. ii. l. 6, p. 496, *Ed. Serranti.*

He replied, that the former manner of preaching ought to produce great effects, since so many worldly people were opposed to it: and he added, that some preachers of great repute would lose their credit, and his doctrine would maintain its ground in spite of all contradiction.

Lorenzo, in the meantime, considering that this flame every day extended farther, once more renewed his efforts to extinguish it, or, at least, to keep it at a distance from him. He sent five of the principal citizens to Fra Girolamo, noble, influential, and discreet persons—Domenico Bonsi, Guido Antonio Vespucci, Paoli Antonio Soderini, a man of great intelligence, Francesco Valari, a citizen of the highest reputation, and Bernardo Rucellai, a cousin of Lorenzo, who afterwards, by King Charles of France, was looked on as lord of Florence. These persons were dispatched to the prior, with directions to conceal the fact of their being sent to him, but to appear as visiting him spontaneously for the sake of the common good and peace of the city, and for the advantage of the convent, of which they had always been benefactors.

Arrived at the convent, and finding themselves in the presence of the prior, for the purpose of exhorting him to change the manner of his preaching, and the matter of his discourses, they appeared all on a sudden as if they had been struck dumb and spirit stricken, and at length, as well as they could, made the proposal known to the Father, and expressed their opinions to him.

The prior, without any apparent disturbance, but with much prudence, addressed briefly these words to them:—"You say that you are come to me of your own accord for the good of your city, and for the love that you bear to our convent; and I tell you that it is not so. But Lorenzo of Medici has sent you, to whom in reply, on my part say;—that he is a Florentine and the first man in the city, and I am a stranger and a poor friar. Nevertheless, tell him that it is he who has to go from hence, and that it is I who have to stay. He must go, and I shall re-

main. At which words, the good gentlemen, not knowing what to say, begged leave to take their departure."*

In a sermon preached in 1497, Savonarola narrated this incident, and appealed for the truth of it to four of the persons who were sent to him, who were still living, and some of them present at this sermon. But, in addition to Burlamacchi's report, Fra Girolamo states, that he bade the messengers of Lorenzo tell him, "He should repent of his sins, for God had ordained the punishment of him and his." Moreover, he adds, "Many at this time told me, I would be exiled if I continued preaching in this manner;" and I replied to all, "Do you who have wives and children fear exile. Your city is to me only as a grain of sand in comparison with the earth."†

There was at that time a famous preacher in Florence, more endowed with eloquence than with holy doctrine, named Mariano Genezanno, a friar of the order *Ermitano*, for whom Lorenzo of Medici had built a most beautiful convent outside of the city, near the gate of San Gallo, in the church of which convent he then preached on festival days with great effect and applause. Great numbers of people were attracted by his eloquence, and the sensibility displayed by him, for he had tears at will; we are told by Burlamacchi he allowed them to trickle down his face on those beneath the pulpit, while he preached. Lorenzo was in the habit of going to his sermons, being a great friend of his, and many also of the nobles of Florence came to hear him. By these he was solicited on one occasion to preach a sermon in which he should show how the mode of predicting future events in sermons was presumptuous, and without fruit, and excited the people to divisions and discords; and the consent of this friar to preach thus, was easily obtained by Lorenzo.

On the day of the Ascension, then, in the year 1491, after vespers in the Church of San Gallo, he preached a sermon, proposing for his text the verse of the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles,—"Non est vestrum nosce tempora vel momenta," and in this sermon the preacher spoke with so much passion, and,

* Burlamacchi. † Carle, Hist. de Sav. p. 116.

so much did he excite himself, that many of his admirers forsook him, and declined going any more to hear him preach.

Amongst other notable persons present on this occasion, was the famous John Pico Mirandola, who ordinarily was in the habit of attending the sermons of Fra Girolamo, as well as his intimate friend Politian, and all the other eminent men of intellect who were then in Florence. But amongst them, after this sermon, there arose great dissension: many of them losing confidence in Father Mariano, and attaching themselves to the doctrines of Fra Girolamo. Hence the words of prophecy were applied by the latter to this adhesion to his pulpit,—"Me opportet crescere illum autem minui;" which words he spoke in the presence of Girolamo Benevieni, a noble citizen of Florence, renowned for his doctrine, who said to him, "If your reverence had the eloquence of Father Mariano, no greater powers of speech could be found." And all the sermon of the latter, word for word, was reported to Fra Girolamo.

The following Sunday he preached on the same text as Father Mariano had done, which he elucidated in the most felicitous manner, according to its true signification, confuting efficaciously the arguments that had been brought forward of an opposite kind; speaking these words at the end of his discourse, as if he was addressing Padre Mariano—"My brother, pleasing would it be to me, had you been present at my discourse, notwithstanding I am well aware it will be reported to you. Do you not remember that many days have not elapsed since you did come to me with all mildness and humility, saying, that our manner of preaching appeared to you so good and efficacious, that you were ready to aid me and do whatsoever might be agreeable to me, and repeating several other things of this sort? What has changed your heart towards me in so short a time, and caused such an alteration in your sentiments?"

All the particulars of this sermon were duly related to Father Mariano, who, in order to avoid losing all credit with the public, simulated, "de novo," a great affection for Fra Girolamo, and invited him soon afterwards to assist in the celebration of a

great festival in the Church of San Gallo, and even to sing the solemn high mass, in order to make it appear to the people that he was on good terms with Fra Girolamo.

But shortly afterwards he went to Rome, and left no means untried to ruin the reputation of Fra Girolamo; and on a particular occasion, preaching in the College of Cardinals before Alexander the Sixth, he was bold enough to denounce Fra Girolamo, using these words—"Oh, holy Father, burn this agent of Satan—burn him, burn, I say, this scandal of the whole church,"—openly making mention of the name of Fra Girolamo.

These things being related to the latter in Florence, he made a public reference to them when preaching in the Duomo, saying,—"May God pardon thee! But he will punish thee! and before long, so it will be manifested to those who attend to the state and the temporal government." And so it came to pass; for not long afterwards (namely, after the downfall of the Medici), a conspiracy of certain citizens of Florence was discovered, the object of which was to restore the Medici; on which account, five of the conspirators were beheaded, and Father Mariano, and Tira Basilio, of the same order, a tutor of Lorenzo in early life, were publicly expelled from Florence, for being disaffected to the state; and eventually Father Mariano fell into sickness, in which he lost the use of his limbs, but still retaining the use of his tongue, though it then was of small service to him, the Cardinal Santa Croce jestingly said to him, "Thou art become paralytic except in the organ of speech, which you made an ill use of enough," as indeed he had always done.

In the latter part of the year 1491, Fra Girolamo began to expound the book of Genesis, preaching on that subject continuously to the year 1494, except during one Lent, when he preached in Bologna, as we shall mention in another place.*

* Burlamacchi, Vita de Savon. ap Baluzii Miscel. tome i. pp. 535, 536.

CHAPTER VII.

SAVONAROLA IN THE OFFICE OF PRIOR OF SAN MARCO.—HIS CONDUCT IN THE CONVENT.

"Transeat in exemplum!"

"My brethren, as in natural things, whatever moves, sets out from that which is fixed, and all animals who would go forward, at every step plant the foot firmly on the soil; so in spiritual life we must fix our hearts on the love of Jesus Christ before everything, if we would proceed regularly in good works. We must believe that the source of a good life is the love of God and the love of our neighbour, and believing this, seek to obtain and exercise it."

Ep. of Sav. to his Brethren.

In the midst of all the turmoil of the life and labours of Savonarola, and his struggles with the adversaries of truth and piety, it is gratifying to follow him into the interior of the convent, and to observe him in the paternal relations of his office with the young and the aged, the learned and the illiterate, the froward and the meek and humble, those in whom the frailties of nature, and the infirmities of an irritable mind, or a passionate temperament, might not have been overcome by the austerities of monastic life, and those also who had arrived at the sublimest heights of spirituality.

Among the reforms carried into effect by Savoranola, the one to which he seemed to attach the most importance, was the restoration of that old spirit of poverty, and simplicity of life, that had been the early characteristics of his order. With this view, he caused all the possessions of the cloisters to be disposed of, in order that the monks might be delivered at once from the cares of property, and the tendencies to cupidity connected with it. He introduced moreover into the convents regular

habits of industry and study. The lay brethren were obliged to select whatever profitable occupation seemed to be most suitable to them, while on the professed brethren and novices it was incumbent to devote allotted periods of their time, according to their several capacities and tastes, to the study of theology, and philosophy, and ancient languages, and in an especial manner, to the proper qualifications for preaching, that paramount object of the Dominican order.

Selfishness and vain-glory were two evil tendencies which the prior fled from all approach to, or contact with, as he would have fled from a pestilence.

He was in the habit often, as he walked about his cell or the cloisters, to carry in his hand a small ivory figure of a death's head, on which he used to meditate.

There was always in his manner and in his looks a remarkable suavity and sweetness, which gave a peculiar but indescribable feeling of satisfaction and interior comfort to every one who approached him.

Those who have conversed much with persons eminently holy, or read much of sanctified, spiritualised people, will understand what is meant even by this unsuccessful effort to explain the ineffable sweetness, peace, and purity of the unworldly, utterly passionless, yet love-beaming look of exalted piety and intense love of the Redeemer.

Of his habits and modes of life, the account of Burlamacchi agrees with all that we find in other biographers on these points. He regularly attended the divine offices in the choir, in the day and the night also, notwithstanding his long and arduous studies of the Holy Scriptures, and the performance of all clerical duties.

He had stated periods for seeing people, and for resolving doubts and difficulties of conscience, on which he was consulted by persons from all parts, far and near.

He slept only five hours during the night, and used a very small quantity of food. His great recreation was to converse familiarly, though on subjects of solemn interest, with the no-

vices. He used to say to the old monks, when they talked to him about his sermons and his preparations for them,—"Let me have some time, if you want me to preach well, to talk with my little children" (the novices). And when he was with them, he always spoke to them of divine things, and of the Sacred Scriptures. In which way of discoursing with the young religious, he declared he had learned many things; and he used to say, that through the organs of these simple youths, as *vasi mondi*, pure and uncontaminated vessels filled with the holy spirit, God often spoke, and expounded the Holy Scriptures.*

Fra Girolamo was wont occasionally to give his brethren and himself a day's recreation in the country, in some secluded place, where they could enjoy the beauties of nature, and the pleasures not only of familiar discourse of God and of his goodness without interruption, but also the amusement of spiritual songs, of a lively, spirit-stirring, exhilarating kind, and of gymnastic exercises for the young, and little pious representations like the mysteries of old on a small scale, in which the novices took part.

If we enter into those scenes of the fifteenth century, and form an opinion of them and the single-minded, humbly pious, firmly-believing religious actors in them, by the standard of the habits and customs of our age, and our nation, of the pastimes and recreations that are befitting for people of refinement and civilization, and especially of a class in whose members sanctimony must be seen externally, to give any idea of interior sanctity, we are not likely to form a very just opinion of those pic-nics of the prior of San Marco and his brothers, and the relaxations of the young people of the order.

"When they walked into the country," says Burlamacchi, "and had sufficient exercise on those agreeable occasions, they reposed in some shady place, in the strong heat of the day, and after a slight repast, the father prior usually read a little to them from the Sacred Scriptures, and then they would all gather round him, and beg of him to give them an exposition

* Burlamacchi.

of what had been read, or on some particular chapter bearing on any passing subject of interest. Sometimes he made the young novices sing spiritual canticles in praise of our Lord, '*laude devota*,' and on other rarer occasions, mingle seemly dances in a circle with the laude. Then, after another walk, he called good-naturedly on some of the brethren to recite some passage of lively interest in the life of a saint, or he gave out a verse of a psalm, and required a brief exposition of it from the youthful members of the order."

On one occasion, under the shadow of a fig tree, he amused them by cutting out of the pith of trees of some peculiar kind little images of doves, which he fashioned with remarkable skill and artistic taste, and distributed them to all around him one by one.

Often in the evenings, in the convent, he made them sing hymns and psalms with great sweetness and fervour of devotion.

At other times, when the novices were grouping round him, a circle would be formed by his directions, and one of them would be placed in the midst, and made to represent some saint of pure and holy life, and *laude* were sung in honour of the child Jesus, or the blessed Virgin; and 'the mystery' closed sometimes with the imaginations of the juvenile actors and audience strongly excited, and the exaltation of ideas manifested in rapturous looks, and in reiterated exclamations, full of passionate devotion and tender piety, such as these:—*Giesu dolce! Giesu Signor di Signori! Virgine bella! Casta pia! Madre de Dio! Virgine pieno de misericordia!*

> "Vicinas alii, charitum que choreas
> Carmine concelebrent: nos veri dogma severum
> Triste sonant pulsæ nostra testudini chordæ."

"Let others celebrate in song the charms of all the neighbouring Venuses, and the dances in which the graces mingle. For us the task is to devote the solemn strains of psalmody to the severe doctrines of truth."

On one occasion, when at Fiesole with many of the brethren,

about two hundred in number, in an excursion for recreation, he provided for their instruction and amusement, by allowing each in turn to propose some doubt, which he undertook to resolve; and in this way, pouring out the rich treasures of his doctrine and erudition, he delighted and instructed his spiritual children.

But in all these exercises of the intellectual powers and subjects of conversation for recreation and amusement, as well as for higher purposes, it was observed by Fra Jacopo de Sicilia, that he never spoke an idle word.

When any inconvenience was felt by a member of the community, he had recourse at once to the father prior. When any fault was committed, the first intimation of it to the prior was always from the offender himself. He had the gift of inspiring confidence in all around him, in old and young.

When his brethren complained to him of undergoing temptations, he always bade them repeat the words—*Jesus and Maria*—for their safeguard and sure protection.

When the old friars complained of the young, he would turn away anger with a good-natured smile, and say—"they would be more grave and well-behaved when they were old."

In one of his letters to his beloved young disciples, he writes to them thus :—

"Above all things, love God with all your heart; seek his honour more than the salvation of your own souls; strive diligently to purify your mind by frequent confession; raise your affections above earthly things; communicate frequently and devoutly; never consider yourself better than any one, however sinful, but rather worse; do not think ill of any one, but always well; be often silent; do not delight in company or feasts, be as much alone as your station will permit. Let murmuring, detracting, slanderous, deceitful, idle words be far from your ears, and still further from your tongue; pray often, meditate every hour, endeavour to unite the whole family in true peace, show no haughtiness in word or action. You must not be too familiar with those beneath you, but rather adopt a courteous

gravity with them; ever pray for perseverance, being always fearful, and having God always before your eyes; renew your good resolutions every day, and confirm yourself in well-doing; despair not for any sin. Pray to God for me constantly, that He may make me do what I teach."

He writes to his "brethren beloved in Christ:"—

"Since the life of man is a warfare upon earth, we must think Christ is like a captain, who orders his soldiers to different posts. To be good soldiers, and do what belongs to our part, so that the conflict may be carried on in an orderly manner, we must be obedient to the captain, and fight wherever he places us, especially when our chief is one who cannot err. If the soldiers do not comply with the regulations of their leader, choosing to do everything after their own fashion, they endanger their own persons as well as the whole army. We ought then always in the spiritual life to think of exercising charity in such manner, and in such place as God wills, who orders everything well, and has made various conditions among men, ordained different merits and different crowns. Yet many deceive themselves in this conflict, who fancy that a good life consists in perpetual prayer, or abstinence, or study of the Scriptures, or other similar good works, and being intent upon one of these only, not exerting themselves in every place and every time, such persons must have particular respect to certain times and places, so when they are hindered in these exercises they fall into impatience and vexation of mind."*

When the plague was committing great ravages in Florence, and had even taken off some of the community of San Marco, Fra Girolamo kept his ground, undaunted by the closest contact with the sick—nearly all the other members of the community had fled the convent; but in a letter to one of his brethren, Bechuto, he censures religious people who abandon their flocks in times like these, and who are not disposed to encounter any amount of danger, or even death itself, in the performance of their duties to the sick and the dying.

Savonarola not only effected the reform of the convents of

* Eng. Biogr.

monks of his order in Florence, but also all the monasteries of nuns of the third Dominican order and in his jurisdiction. We are told in this part of his labours, "he encountered extraordinary difficulties, not only outside, but within (the monasteries of the nuns), on account of the opposition of the tepid members of religious orders, who endeavoured, with their futile arguments, to confound and embarrass the consciences of others."*

In one of his tracts, "Del Reggimento di Firenze," he thus refers to those difficulties: "Be it observed, all the city of Florence would have been as our most holy religious order, were it not for unworthy ecclesiastics and friars without zeal"—causa, i cattivi sacerdoti e tepidi religiosi.

The difficulties that Savonarola had to encounter in his attempts to reform the monasteries of the nuns of his own order, and the nature of his views of the mode of life it was incumbent on the members of those monasteries to lead, are to be learned in a letter which he addressed to the prioress of the Dominican order in Pisa, dated the 10th December, 1493.†

After telling "the honoured mother" that interior things are judged by men by exterior appearances, but it was God only—"qui scrutatur Corda et Renes"—and by him the tree was known by its fruits; he goes on to vindicate his reforming efforts:—

"I wish, then, that of your charity you should believe that it is false that we have instituted a new mode of living, for I fear that you have been led to give credit to many false things. We have not adopted any other mode of living, neither in diet, nor in ceremonies, nor customs of any kind, except that which our rule and constitutions prescribe. It is quite true we have retrenched some superfluities contrary to the regulations of our fathers, which, in these times, are lost sight of by members of religious orders; but the retrenchment does not constitute any novelty. Its object is to preserve the constitutions of our ancient fathers, to whom the new fathers of our time cannot be compared, either in wisdom or in holiness. We desire to construct

* Burlamacchi, p. 551.

† Lettere de Savonarola, in Vit. Sav. Burlamacchi, Appendix, p. 586.

convents fit for persons who have vowed to love poverty, to use clothing of coarse materials, no matter how old and much worn, to eat and drink as we ought, to learn from the saints, to do with all sobriety, to have cells poorly furnished without any superfluity, to preserve silence, and give up the mind to meditation and solitude, abandoning familiar intercourse with the world. I do not agree that this is a new mode of conventual life, but I grant it is new for the institution of the Mendicant orders, that convents should be built like palaces, with marble columns and spacious apartments, which would suffice for lords; to have worldly possessions against the professed vows of each order, and not having faith in Jesus Christ, who said, 'First seek the kingdom of God, and all things will be given to you.' It is a novelty for that institute to use habits that are not of common cloth, but of fine and delicate textures; to pray little, and to gad much about—orare poco è in ogni luogo vagare e discorrere. It is a novelty for the monastic institutions to vow to be poor, and yet to want for nothing; and to practise other similar *novelties*, which are a scandal to souls. Our way of living does not give scandal, but excites admiration in the city of Florence, and even great edification to those who witness it. *And, notwithstanding, I wish you to understand that we have not yet commenced to do what we desire.* For as yet, little or nothing have we changed of the whole course of things which is common to all. And when it appears good to us, we will, by little and little, with the help of prayer and well-matured counsel, restrain the evils of it. Consider attentively, most beloved mother in Christ, that which I have written, leaving on one side all worldly wisdom, and, above all things, applying yourself to prayer, by which means, I trust in God that you may be enlightened respecting those affairs of ours above mentioned."*

From the same letter from which the above extract is taken, I transcribe a few detached sentences faithfully rendered, which will give some idea of the kind of thoughts which filled the mind of the man who passes with a large portion of the Christian world for a heretic, or a fanatic, or an impostor :—

* Mansi, In. Monum. Hist. ap. Mis. Baluzii, tom. i. p. 587.

"Now is the time to renovate ourselves, and despise the opinions of the world."

"This is the time to combat against the tepid and the false brethren."

"The lukewarm Christians have not many tribulations in this life, because Satan does not persecute his own."

"But the fervent followers of Christ have to encounter great opposition, because they are the adversaries of the Devil."

"Do what is right, and faithfully enter on the good work, however arduous it may be, for the love of God, and do not think of yourself, but of God."

"The goodness of God is so great, that we ought to make sure of obtaining from Him everything that is desired by us, for his honour, and for the salvation of souls."

"All the pusillanimity of spirit that we meet with, comes from the want of faith, and not having a perfect knowledge of the goodness of God."

"Everything succeeds with him who has a lively faith."

"There are three arms, against which all the powers of Hell cannot avail, nor all the world succeed in overcoming, and which secure the success of every great good work,—strong faith, continuous prayer, and humble patience."

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH OF LORENZO DE MEDICI.—ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST MOMENTS, AND INTERVIEW WITH SAVONAROLA, 1492.—SUCCESSION, REGIME, AND FLIGHT OF PIERO.—DOWNFALL OF THE MEDICI.

"Who will give us to hear Cicero's eloquence, and the sounding words of the poets, the soft diction of Plato, and the acuteness of Aristotle? For the Scriptures are far too simple, and contain food only fit for women. Preach to us the refined and sublime! And thus the preachers accommodate themselves to the people. Since they could no more endure sound doctrine, the people have given themselves to lies, they invite such teachers as suit their itching ears, they turn themselves away from the truth, and follow cunningly devised fables. Also the princes and heads of the people will not hear the truth, but say, 'Preach to us what pleases us, preach to us flatteries, and tell us something good.' And hence, Christian people now wander in great darkness."—*Serm. of Sav.*

THE year 1492 was fruitful of events of importance, not only to the continent, but to the civilised world. The power of the Moors in Spain terminated with the conquest of Grenada. The new world was discovered by Columbus; Alexander the Sixth commenced his Pontificate; and Lorenzo de Medici, the Magnificent, terminated his career the 8th of April, 1492.

Angelo Politian has left an interesting account of the closing scene of the career of Lorenzo de Medici, he being an eye-witness of it; and his narrative is no less honourable to the feelings of the writer than to the character of the Prince, of whose dying moments and death he so beautifully treats. In that account, the monk, Girolamo Savonarola, makes his first appearance on the stage of Italian history, in a character worthy of him:

"Cum de Illo loquor, faciam ut attente audiatis."
CICERO, *Phillipp.* 2.

But before we turn to Politian's account, to see how the Dominican is presented to us there, let us endeavour to realize the ideas we may have formed, even imperfectly, from other sources of information respecting this scene, and one of the chief actors in it.

We must enter the upper chamber of a suburban villa of the Medici, with a full recollection of the great space the man who is dying there, had occupied in the history of his times, and in the eyes of all his cotemporaries throughout Europe.

We must picture to ourselves the gorgeous chamber, with its costly furniture and elegant adornments, its works of art and objects of antiquity of exceeding rarity. The men of great eminence in literature, who are standing by the bed-side of their benefactor; the accomplished scholar, Politian; the man who was the marvel of his age, John Pico Mirandola; the celebrated physician from Pavia, with his "costly gems" duly triturated for administration to the patient.

Let us fancy we have before our eyes the sick chamber of a palace, a dying man in the prime of life, of commanding aspect, with a lofty brow, an expanded forehead, features of a classic mould, traits of elegance, of taste, and refinement of mind manifest in that face of marble, which the dews of death are now fast spreading over. Let us notice the emanations of a noble intellect, still faintly gleaming in those languid eyes, which are growing dim and dimmer every moment.

Let us turn from the renowned Lorenzo de Medici, in his extremity, to the humble friar of San Marco, who has been summoned to attend him. Let us observe how unconscious this friar seems of the presence of the great men who are in that chamber. How he keeps aloof from the circle of courtiers and scholars. How little account he seems to take of the philosophers, who were such eminent Platonists. How undisturbed he is, in the midst of so much solicitude for the life of a man of enormous wealth, and extensive patronage.

Let us observe how the poor friar conducts himself at the death-bed of a prince and a philosopher, renowned for worldly

wisdom, a founder of a new Platonic school, a favourite of fortune, always prosperous, celebrated for his wealth, and flattered for it, a ruler always jealous of ecclesiastical power, seldom in amity with the court, or the Church of Rome.

Let us imagine we are gazing intently in the face of that singular-looking monk, with the small bronze crucifix in his long, thin hands, as he stands before the dying Lorenzo de Medici. We behold a man in his fortieth year, of middle size, erect and easy in his carriage, and unembarrassed in his deportment—his spare form well proportioned and firmly knit, attired in the habit of his order; his air, gait, gesture, and all his movements are graceful, and give assurance of gentle blood and of generous impulses in the heart of that Dominican. Yet the tonsure and the cowl, peradventure, in the sick chamber of "the Magnificent" de Medici, the munificent patron of Platonic philosophy, bring a curl on the lip of some of the spectators. That simple-minded minister of Christ, lowly as he is, makes his presence felt, however, in the inmost recesses of the heart of Lorenzo, and not by words or looks of harshness or severity, for however grave his manner, the predominant expression of his remarkable countenance is amiability and exalted benevolence. Still in the vigour of life, there is evidence in his anxious look and wrinkled brow, of a close acquaintance with the ills of life, and a large experience of the evils and abuses that prevailed in civil and religious affairs, in social and in public life, and predominated, too, in the scene of his missionary labours. He looks like a man whose hopes are placed in heaven, whose thoughts were often in communion with the spiritual world, and whose trust in God was so firm, that no storms of adversity, no billows of despair or doubt, could shake his confidence in the divine protection. His aspect is that of a man of an ardent disposition, subdued in some degree by austerities and mortification. There is a resolute character in his regard, but there is an indication in it, also, of feelings of kindliness and affection; and about the mouth, with the fullness of the lips somewhat *prononcée*, and their well-marked outlines finely curved, there is an expression

of that benevolence widely diffused, that has strong sympathies with every thing beautiful in nature, with the young, and innocent, and good, as well as with the poor, the oppressed, and the afflicted.

The lids of the downcast eyes are slow to move; but when uplifted, organs of vision are unveiled of no ordinary brilliancy, clear and beautiful, but so serene and calm withal, that those who meet their glances, can hardly imagine what latent power over the spirit of other men is there, till those light blue eyes, of the exquisitely clear and soft *azul* which belongs to the Italian skies, are lighted up in their large orbits, by emotions excited at the first glimpse of falsehood, impiety, or oppression, or aught that outrages the interests of truth, humanity, or religion.

Let us call to mind, in fine, a cast of countenance that speaks of heroic purposes, and of sweetness of disposition, guileless and gentle as the nature of a child: Savonarola is then before us. We may now fancy we behold him, with becoming dignity and holiness, performing his sacred functions; leaving nothing undone to act on a conscience, too long, perhaps, unused to the accents of Christian admonition. We may picture to ourselves that Dominican preacher, of an austere life, whose doctrines have some vital influence, whose power in the pulpit is beginning to be talked of in Florence, in his missionary character, on this occasion performing his duties as if with a sense of oppression on his spirit, assuming an aspect of reserve and gravity, in the midst of expressions of sympathy and concern, on the part of obsequious courtiers, and literary protegées, better versed in the philosophy of Plato than that of Christ; and in the midst, also, of the lamentations of surrounding friends and acquaintances.

And now that we have some faint idea of the exterior of the man who attended Lorenzo de Medici in his dying moments, let us turn to the courtly scholar, Politian, the friend and protegée of Lorenzo, for the full details of the manner Lorenzo de

Medici "entertained his fate," in the presence of his friends and followers, in his last moments.

Politian, writing to his friend, Jacopo Antiquario, of the last moments and death of Lorenzo, says:—"The day before his death, being in severe illness at his villa of Caregi, he became so debilitated, that there no longer remained any hope of preserving him; of which change, with the wisdom that characterized him, becoming well aware, first of all things he called for a confessor, to whom he unburthened his conscience. And this, I was afterwards told, it was truly marvellous to see, with what courage and equanimity of mind he made his dispositions for another world; how he recalled every thing that remained to be done, how well he ordered all things relating to this life, and with what prudence and religion he turned his thoughts to the concerns of a future world. About midnight, while tranquilly engaged in meditation, he was told the priest had arrived with the blessed eucharist. He raised himself up, and exclaimed—'Can it be true indeed that my Jesus, who has created and redeemed me, has come even to my dwelling? Raise me from this bed, I beseech you; raise me speedily, that I may go to meet Him.' And speaking thus, and rising up as he best could, supported by his servants, he went forth to meet the priest, as far as the principal saloon, and there, weeping from emotion, he fell on his knees."

[He then repeated a long and fervent prayer, shedding tears abundantly, and all around him weeping likewise; and Politian thus continues his account of the sad scene:—]

"The priest finally gave directions that he should be raised from the ground, and brought back to his bed, in order that he might receive the viaticum more conveniently. Lorenzo opposed this for some time, but after a little, through respect towards the priest, he submitted to his wishes. Being placed in his bed, and having repeated a prayer nearly the same as the former, and being apparently so composed that everything about him breathed a spirit of gravity and devotion, he received the sacrament of the body and the blood of Christ.

"Then he turned to his son Pietro, to console him, while the others present were assenting to his efforts; and he exhorted the young man to submit with patience *to the law of necessity*, that he might not fail to have the aid of heaven, whose decrees, however diverse and inexplicable, are constantly seen to operate for wise purposes."

[Then Politian refers to several wise counsels given to Pietro by his dying father, and proceeds with his narrative.]

"Lazzaro, the physician, had just arrived from Pavia, in my opinion a most learned man, but who, having been called in too late to be of any avail, ordered the trituration of various gems, for some medicinal purpose which I did not understand. Lorenzo then called his servants, to know what the physician was doing; and I answering that he was preparing a remedy to soothe the viscera, he recognized my voice, and regarding me with tenderness in his looks, as he was ever wont to do, he said to me, 'Oh, Angelo, are you here?' and then lifting up the languid arms, he pressed both my hands in his. I could not restrain my sighs and tears, notwithstanding all my efforts to conceal my emotions from him, turning away my face from him. But he, without any apparent disturbance, continued pressing my hands in his. When he perceived that grief prevented me from speaking, little by little he relaxed his hold of my hands, as if the pressure had ceased naturally. I went away quickly into an adjoining closet, and there I gave free vent to my sorrow and my tears. Afterwards, having dried my eyes and returned to the chamber, scarcely had he seen me, and looked into my face, than he called me to him, and asked me about Pico de Mirandola. I told him that Pico had remained in the city, fearing to disturb him with his presence. Then Lorenzo said; 'And I, if I did not fear that coming here would be troublesome to him, would be glad to see him, and to speak with him for the last time before I leave you all.'

"I asked Lorenzo if I should summon him. 'Yes, certainly,' was the reply, 'and the sooner the better.' His wishes were carried into effect; Pico arrived, and seated himself at the bed-

side, and I also was leaning on the bed, bending forward close to his knees, in order that I might better hear for the last time the voice, now weak and languid, of my dear master.

"With what kindness, my good God! with what affability, I will even say, with what endearing fondness, Lorenzo accosted his friend, Pico. First, he prayed him to pardon the trouble he had given him; he begged him to receive this summons as a token of his friendship, and the love he had for him; and he said to him, that he would die more willingly after having seen so dear a friend.

"Then he turned the discourse, as he was wont to do, to agreeable and familiar topics, and even joking with us, he said, he wished that death had spared him a little longer, in order that he might have completed the library he was engaged in making. Pico was scarcely gone, when there entered into the room Fra Girolamo Savonarola, a man celebrated for doctrine and for sanctity, and an admirable preacher—*uomo celebre per dottrina è per santita e valorosa Predicatore.* Fra Girolamo exhorting Lorenzo to remain firm in his faith; to propose, if God should grant him a prolongation of his days, to live in future far from all sin, and to receive with resignation the stroke of death, if God was pleased that he should die;—Lorenzo replied to him, 'that he was most firm in his religion, *that his life had always been conformable to it*, and that nothing was more desirable to him than death, if it was the Divine will that he should cease to live.'

"Then Fra Girolamo was about to leave the chamber, when Lorenzo said to him, 'Oh, Padre, before you leave me, deign to give me your benediction.' Then, lowering his head and composing himself, as if yielding up entirely every thought to piety and religion, he went on responding to the words and to the prayers of the friar, without being in the least moved by the lamentations of all the familiar friends around him, whose grief was loud and universal.

"It seemed as if all were about to die, with the exception of Lorenzo; so tranquil was he alone in the common affliction.

And thus, without giving any signs of disquiet or sadness, he preserved his accustomed firmness and constancy of mind. In the mean time, the physicians were standing round the bed, and not to appear idle, they tormented him with their assistance. But he suffered this, and took everything that was offered to him, not with the expectation of advantage, but in order not to give in his dying moments the least displeasure to any one. And, even to the end, he bore up so courageously, that he joked sometimes even about his own death; as, on one occasion, when having offered him some nourishment, and asked him if it was pleasing to him, he said, 'As much as anything can please a dying man.' Finally, tenderly embracing all around him, and humbly asking pardon if he had given trouble or inconvenience to any one in his illness, he disposed himself to receive extreme unction; and at the usual recommendation of the departing soul to God, and the recital from the Gospel of the passion of Christ, he appeared to understand everything that was said, silently moving his lips in prayer, now raising his heavy eyelids, and sometimes even moving his fingers, as if accompanying his thoughts.

"At the end, fixing his eyes on a crucifix of silver ornamented with gems, and pressing his lips to it, from time to time, he expired."*

Politian proceeds to eulogize the virtues of this generous master with great zeal and eloquence. With these eulogies we may dispense, for this account of his death renders all laudations of his amiability, affability, and equanimity unnecessary.

Plato had few worthier or more illustrious disciples, most assuredly in modern times, than Lorenzo de Medici. Of him in his later years, as of a heathen of great virtue in days of yore, it might be said with some truth—"He maintained a conversation and behaviour, honest before men, manifested in both the meekness and mildness of wisdom."

Who might not say of Politian, the biographer of Lorenzo de

* Ep. Pol. l. iv. Ep. ii. Apud Storia della Letteratura Italiana del Cav. Ab. Gir. Tiraboschi, tom. iv. par. i. p. 39, *et seq.*

Medici, if he wrote his record true, as of such a Chronicler as Griffith:

> "After my death, I wish no other herald;
> No other speaker of my living actions,
> To keep my honour from corruption."*

But truth, not flattery, it is, that Christian men must look for to keep their honour from corruption.

Tiraboschi says—"Politian's account of Lorenzo's death, accompanied by the most sincere sentiments of Christian piety, appears to him a great deal more worthy of credit than that of the author of Savonarola's Life, published by Monsignor Mansi, in the first volume of Miscellanea Baluzii, wherein it is stated that Savonarola, being sent for to confess Lorenzo, having intimated to him that it was absolutely essential that he should restore to the republic of Florence its ancient liberty, and Lorenzo, at hearing such words as these, turned his shoulder to Savonarola, who went away without absolving Lorenzo, so that he died deprived of the sacrament. An account," continues Tiraboschi, "shewn to be false by Politian's letter, which states that Lorenzo had already received the viaticum before Savonarola's arrival, and which is at variance with itself, as every one who carefully examines it may perceive, without my undertaking to dispute a point which does not belong to this work."†

Tiraboschi adopted Politian's statement without hesitation, because a great patron of literature was glorified in it. But he did not think it necessary to examine statements of an opposite kind, and to cite them in extenso.

As Burlamacchi's account of the death-bed of Lorenzo differs in several material points from that of Politian, and on the face of it bears the stamp of authenticity, I insert it here:

"Lorenzo finding himself labouring under a mortal illness, asked for a confessor; and having sent for Don Guido degli Angioli, and Father Mariano della Barba, his intimate friend, he said—'I do not wish for either of them; send for the prior of San Marco, for I have found no true monk but him.' A

* King Henry VIII. act iv. sc. 2.

† Storia della Letteratura d'Italia, tom. vi. part i. p. 43.

messenger was then despatched for him, in the name of Lorenzo, to whom he said, 'Tell Lorenzo it is not I of whom he stands in need, for we are not of accord, and therefore it is not expedient that I should go.' The servant having returned with this answer, Lorenzo again said to him, 'Go back to the prior and tell him to come by all means, for I wish to be in accord with him, and to do all that he will tell me to do.' The servant returned to San Marco, and having delivered his message, the prior immediately set out for Careggio, the villa of Lorenzo, distant two miles from the city, where he lay sick, and took for his companion an old man, Fra Gregorio, of the Infirmary, to whom, on the road, he revealed that Lorenzo would die of the present illness, and could not escape it. Having arrived at the villa, and entered the apartment of Lorenzo, he saluted him with all due courtesy; and after exchanging a few words, Lorenzo said to him—'My father, I wish to make my confession, but three grave offences hold me back, and also cause me to despair.' Fra Girolamo replied—'And what are those offences?' Then Lorenzo answered—'The three offences are these, which I know not if God will pardon me. The first is the sacking of the city of Volterra, which it suffered on account of the promises which I made, and the shocking abuses which many young creatures suffered on that occasion. The second offence is the injustice done to the charitable Monte delle Fanciulle, on account of which many of its inmates have suffered wrong, being obliged to remain there on account of not having received their marriage portions. The third offence is, that committed in the case of the Pazzi, when many innocent persons were put to death.' To which Fra Girolamo replied: 'Lorenzo, despair not thus, because God is merciful, and he will even shew mercy to you, if you are willing to do three things, which I shall point out to you.' 'Tell me then,' said Lorenzo, 'what are those three things?' The father replied: 'The first thing is, that you should strive to have a great and lively faith and belief that God can and wishes to pardon you.' To which, Lorenzo answered, 'This great faith I have, and thus do I believe.' 'Then,' added

the father, 'it is necessary that everything wrongfully acquired should be restored by you as far as it is possible, leaving to your children such substance as may be fitting for the decent maintenance of private citizens.' At these words Lorenzo was roused a little, but after a short while he said—'And even this will I do.' The father then proceeded to repeat the third thing he had spoken of. '*Lastly, it is necessary that you make restitution to Florence of her liberty, and to the state of the popular rule that belongs to a republic.*' At these words Lorenzo turned his back to the speaker, and never made other answer to him. Therefore, the father went away, and left him without making any other confession; and after some time, Lorenzo departed this life, and passed to another.

"All this (adds Burlamacchi) is reported by Fra Silvestro Maruffi, the intimate companion of Fra Girolamo, even to the end of his life.

"Thus also reports Messer Domenico Benivieni, called the Scotino, a man of great doctrine and holy life, a canon of San Lorenzo, who states that he had this account from some familiar friends of Lorenzo, to whom he had recounted the particulars before he died. Of this visit also, Politian speaks in his Latin epistle, printed along with his other letters.

"Fra Girolamo was wont to say, when discoursing about Lorenzo, that he never found a man so well endowed by God with natural advantages, and that it grieved him greatly he had not sent for him at the beginning, for if he had confided in the grace and goodness of God, Lorenzo's salvation would have been effected." He died on the 11th of April, 1492.*

It will be observed that Politian's Platonist ideas of Christian heroism, and Tiraboschi's philosophical opinions of those religious principles which constitute "the most sincere Christian piety," are identical.

Nevertheless, Politian's description of the death-bed of Lorenzo de Medici, in some particulars, is one, which would be better adapted for the closing scene of an amiable pagan philo-

* Burlamacchi, Vita de Sav. p. 537.

sopher, than that of a dying Christian, humble, penitent, and solemnly disposed to prepare for eternity.

There are parts of Politian's description quite contradictory. It is difficult to comprehend how the same man could manifest the fervid piety ascribed to Lorenzo, when he rose from his bed to receive the sacrament, and have the boldness to assure the minister of religion who stood before him, when he was about to face his Eternal Judge, that his life had always been in conformity with the principles of religion!

To form a judgment of the value of Politian's testimony in favour of Lorenzo, it is necessary to know something of his position and character. In one of his letters to Matthew Corveno, King of Hungary, he says, "I have been raised by the favour and friendship of Lorenzo de Medici, to some degree of rank and celebrity, without any other recommendation than my proficiency in literature."

Roscoe says, "The friendship of Lorenzo provided for all his wants, and enabled him to prosecute his studies free from the embarrassments and interruptions of pecuniary affairs."*

"He owed likewise to Lorenzo's favour several honours and offices. He was enrolled among the citizens of Florence. He was appointed secular prior of the College of St. Giovanni. He was enabled to enter into clerical orders, and subsequently to obtain the degree of Doctor of Civil Law. He was made a canon of the Cathedral of Florence. He was entrusted with the education of Lorenzo's children. He was the care-taker of the valuable collection of his manuscripts and objects of antiquity. He constantly resided under his roof, and was his inseparable companion at those hours which were not devoted to the more important concerns of the state."†

In short, he was the protegée, the favourite, and the factotum of Lorenzo de Medici; and there can be no doubt there was a full sense of all the obligations he was under to Lorenzo in these capacities.

He has omitted several things in his account of the interview

* Life of Lor. de Med. p. 119. † Ibid. p. 120.

between Lorenzo and Savonarola, which he deemed unfavourable to those impressions which he wished to leave on the minds of his readers, with respect to Lorenzo's conduct on many occasions.

There is in all probability no deliberate falsification in that account, but there are several suppressions of truth, which he, however, has not turned to the disadvantage of Savonarola, but which Roscoe, in his excessive zeal for Lorenzo's fame, has certainly very unjustly made subservient to his unfavourable views of Savonarola's character. The fact is, Roscoe's opinions of Savonarola are not the result of any deep research or careful inquiry into his character, acts, or writings, in the original accounts of cotemporaries of the Dominican, or in Savonarola's own works; his opinions are wholly founded on the views that were taken of Savonarola by his great opponents, the Medici and their adherents.

When Savonarola bid Lorenzo "continue firm in the faith," that "state super vias antiquas" was certainly not addressed to him without good cause. When he exhorted the sick man to propose amendment of life—to put all sin far from him—that spiritual man had surely good reasons for his exhortation, and for some other councils which he felt it his duty to address to him, with which Politian has not favoured his readers.

Many acts of Lorenzo de Medici were not in conformity with the principles of religion, of justice, or humanity, both in his public and in his private life. Could he possibly have forgotten the conduct he pursued towards the people of Volterra, by whose councils that expedition was sent against them, which terminated in the carnage and spoliation of the people of the captured city? Could he have been forgetful of the butcheries of upwards of one hundred of his fellow-citizens, many of them done under the windows of his palace, after the defeat of the Pazzi conspiracy? And with respect to spiritual things, could he have been then unmindful of the means he had recourse to to provide for the elevation of his son to ecclesiastical dignities, and also for that of the illegitimate son of his brother Julian?

The counsel of Lorenzo de Medici to the supreme head of the Church, Pope Innocent the Eighth, does not accord with the declaration of the dying man to Savonarola, namely, that his life was conformable to religion. Was it in conformity with religion, or with his own sordid interests, that he pressed the Pope to secure honours and emoluments to his kindred? he, Lorenzo, having married his daughter to the illegitimate son of that Pontiff. Savonarola knew well Lorenzo's notions of zeal for religion and morality, and their obligations on his conscience, when he exhorted him to repent, and to put all sin far from him

Politian did not deem it consistent with his sense of duty to the memory of his benefactor to leave the fact on record—that when Savonarola, in the few solemn words he addressed to the dying man, reminded him of the indispensable necessity of restitution in all cases of wrong and injustice done to our fellow-man, to give validity to the sacrament of penance, he specially pointed out to Lorenzo one act of restitution, still incumbent on him to perform, namely, to *restore to Florence her liberty, and to the people their former state of a Republic.*

Lorenzo, who had assented to all other obligations imposed on him by his spiritual adviser, turned in his bed, and made no reply to that intimation. Then it was that Savonarola was about to leave the room, when Lorenzo entreated him to return, and not to depart without giving his blessing, and with that request the man of God, as it became his ministry, complied.

But no formal words of absolution were pronounced by him, and no confession was made to him, and, it may be added, no seal of secresy was violated by him, as some writers of eminence, who ought to have known better, have asserted.

Fra Guglio Bartoli, of the Dominican order, in his biography and defence of Savonarola, the most authentic record of his life, from original documents and cotemporary accounts of his career, states, "that at this interview of Fra Girolamo with Lorenzo—which had been twice solicited before it had taken place—Lorenzo was much moved when Savonarola made his appearance, and expressed his anxiety and apprehensions for his salvation.

He spoke of matters which weighed upon his conscience, and especially of the crime committed at Volterra, of certain endowments taken from a charitable institution—the *Monte delle Fanciulli*—and not restored to it, and lastly of the carnage committed in the conspiracy of the Pazzi, when many persons who were innocent suffered with the guilty. The sacred minister of religion then compassionately encouraging him (Lorenzo), bade him hope for pardon . . . but told him three things were requisite to obtain the divine mercy, which conditions the penitent having promised to fulfil, Savonarola rejoined; 'lst. It is necessary that you have a great and lively faith that God will pardon you; *Conviene che abbiate una grande e viva fede che Dio voglia perdonarvi.* 2nd. You ought, as much as lies in your power, make restitution of all ill-acquired gains, and leave to your children such substance as is suitable for persons in the rank of private citizens: *Dovete per quanto ve sia possibile restituire tutto il mal tolto e lasciare a figli tante sostanze che convengano a privati cittadini.* 3rd. It is essential that you should restore to Florence its liberty, and leave its government in its former popular state of a Republic, *E necessario restituire a Firenza la sua liberta e lasciarla nel suo stati populare de Republica.*'"*

But whatever were the faults and defects in the character of Lorenzo, he had one great quality, which better entitled him to the appellation of "Magnificent" than his munificence to artists and scholars; he was of a placable, generous, forgiving nature, easily turned to merciful courses, *on reflection*, and when the first headlong impulses of ambition, or instigations of a spirit of intrigue had been hearkened to by him, and were followed by calm philosophical consideration of the consequences of his action on them.

Had Roscoe made his beau-ideal of a "merchant prince" less perfect and heroic, and though much disposed to good, often drawn to evil,—more human in effect, and amiable in the midst

* Fra G. Bartoli, O. S. D. Apologia de Savonarola, p. 32. 4to. *Fer.* 1782,

of the weaknesses of humanity,—he would have made the subject of his biography a man with stronger claims to human sympathies, after all.

"Lorenzo de Medici," says Tiraboschi, "maintained the honourable position which he enjoyed in the republic to the period of his death, although a private individual; by his talent regulating all public affairs in such a manner that, loved by his own people and respected by strangers, he has gained with posterity an eternal and glorious memory,—'un eterna e glorioa memoria.'* He died at the early age of forty-four years, in 1492, and left three sons: Pietro, who succeeded him in the honours of the republic; John, who became Pope Leo the Tenth; and Julian, who died at an early age."

Guicciardini says: "Neither the age nor understanding of Pietro anywise qualified him for the important charge of his father's greatness. Nor was he capable of proceeding with that moderation in his domestic and foreign concerns; nor had he that prudence to practise what was expedient with his allies, for which his father was so remarkable."†

Lorenzo being gone, who had introduced into Italian policy the new art of maintaining the balance of power, by keeping the rival sovereignties by various influences in a state of mutual control, and restricting the encroaching tendencies of the strong by the subtle arts of intrigue, and the diplomatic astuteness of the smaller states;—Pietro left the great powers of Italy in full possession of all the influence arising from their military strength, while he provoked jealousies and animosities, without any profit to his own country, by seeking to promote mere family interests, and the advantages of those connected with him.

"He swerved," says Guicciardini, "wholly from his father's councils, ceasing to consult the principal citizens, without whose concurrence resolutions were seldom taken by his father in matters of importance. He suffered himself to be entirely directed

* Storia della Letteratura Italiana, tome vi. part i. p. 12.

† Historia d'Italia, lib. i.

by Virginius Orsini, his relative, his wife and mother being both of the Orsini family."*

The mischievous results, in the time of Pietro, of the previous marriage of the son of Innocent with the daughter of Lorenzo, for the peace of Italy, are more clearly shown by Guicciardini, than by any other Italian historian.

The old fatal question of territorial interests became the subject of contention between the see of Rome and the temporal princes and lords of the soil, whose possessions bordered on the patrimony of the Church.

Lorenzo's death, in 1492, being followed in a few months by that of Pope Innocent the Eighth, and Alexander the Sixth being seated on the pontifical throne, Italy became a prey to the jealousies and dissensions of two princes of equal ambition and power: Ferdinand of Naples, and Louis Sforza, of Milan.

"Francesco Cibo, of Genoa," says Guicciardini, "a natural son of Innocent the Eighth, was in possession (at the time of the death of Lorenzo) of Anguillari, Cervetri, and some other small castles in the neighbourhood of Rome. Cibo, after his father's death, went to live in Florence, under the protection of Pietro de Medici, whose sister, Maddalena, he had married. He had no sooner settled in Florence, than Pietro persuaded him to sell those castles to Virginius Orsini for 40,000 ducats. Ferdinand of Naples was at the bottom of this affair, and secretly advanced the greater part of the purchase-money, considering it would be advantageous to him to have Orsini, who was a military man, and also a relative of his, in possession of such strongholds *near Rome*. For he always looked on the power of the Popes as capable of being made instruments of mischief to the peace of his kingdom, which was an ancient fief of the holy see, and which extended for a great many miles along the borders of the ecclesiastical states.

"Ferdinand remembered the trouble those strong places had occasioned, both to his father and himself; and being sensible of the quarrels likely to arise on account of limits, tribute, col-

* Guicciardini, lib. i.

lection of benefices, appeals of barons, and other subjects of cavil, common to all neighbouring princes, especially between vassals and a lord of a fief, he always made it a principal point in his policy, to keep all, or at least the chief, of the Roman barons under his control; and the more so now, as he considered Louis Sforza had too great an ascendant over the Pope's councils, by means of his brother, Cardinal Ascanio."*.....“ Ferdinand, though a prince of great prudence, did not sufficiently consider the consequences of this purchase, which could be to him of small service, in comparison to the great evil it might produce to Italy, by provoking those persons to adopt measures (leading to strife), whose chief aim ought to be to preserve peace and quiet."

The Pope (Alexander the Sixth), enraged at this encroachment on the pontifical authority, asserted his right to those castles, on account of their alienation without his knowledge, which, according to the ecclesiastical law, devolved on the apostolic see. Then publishing to the world the purposes for which they were bought, he filled all Italy with his complaints against Ferdinand, Pietro, and Orsini; protesting at the same time, that to the utmost of his power he would preserve the dignity and rights of the holy see."†

Alexander's notions of the dignity and rights of the holy see were of a nature that may be defined—ideas of property and possessions belonging to the Church, or seizable in its name, that might be made applicable to the uses of his son, Cæsar Borgia.

The contentions arising from the temporal possessions obtained or coveted by the pontiff for his son, and caused by intrigues connected with territorial interests, involved Italy in all the horrors of civil war, embroiled the courts of Rome and Naples, led to intrigues with foreign powers, to the invasion of Italy by Charles the Eighth of France, the abdication and downfall of Ferdinand, and ultimately to the expulsion of the last of the Medici from Florence.

* Guicciardini, lib. i. p. 4.

† Ibid. p. 5.

Pietro's ambition far exceeding his discretion, he incurred the jealousy of the people of Florence, by acts which plainly indicated that he meditated the overthrow of the republic, the establishment of a sovereignty and of his own supreme power; and he further incurred their hatred by his imprudent conduct, in treating, without the knowledge or consent of the republic, with Charles the Eighth, King of France, on the occasion of his invasion of Italy in 1494. Chiefly, or at least nominally, on account of his conduct on that occasion, Pietro and his family were declared traitors to the republic, in the latter part of the same year, 1494, and proscribed.

They and their principal adherents were compelled to fly. The palaces of the Medici, with all their treasures of art, ancient and modern, their magnificent furniture, their gorgeous apparel, their vast mercantile stores, their bank, with all its riches, were sacked by the people of Florence. In the course of a few hours, the house of Medici, that was built up with such consummate prudence and worldly wisdom, was reduced from the highest state of splendour to utter ruin. Of its sudden elevation, and most precipitate downfall, it might be said with truth, "Ex alto ruina venit."

Roscoe sees nothing in the catastrophe, but an evidence of popular ingratitude. But there are other manifestations in it, namely, of the divine retribution falling on the posterity of Lorenzo de Medici, for the barbarous proceedings at Volterra, and the murder, which he might have prevented, of the archbishop of Florence, and the massacre of upwards of one hundred persons, on the occasion of the conspiracy of the Pazzi; against the great majority of whom the only proof of guilt was, the proof of parentage, amity, or intimate relations, commercial or social, with the family of the conspirators.

Pietro de Medici, after his flight, made unavailing efforts to regain his lost position in Florence. He entered into communication with some of the aristocratic party in the city. A conspiracy was formed against the republic, for the restoration of his family; it failed, and four of its agents in Florence were

consigned to the scaffold, it is stated, with the consent of the person then of most influence in Florence, with the people and even the government of the republic—Fra Girolamo Savonarola. But the truth of that assertion remains to be enquired into in another place.

Pietro de Medici, the proscribed, unhappy exile,—destined never more to see his native city, or to set his foot in Tuscany, serving in the ranks of a foreign prince, the invader of his country,—was drowned in the Garigliano, and thus miserably perished in the flower of his age, in the year 1503.*

* Tiraboschi, tomo vi. part i. p. 12.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PONTIFICATE OF ALEXANDER THE SIXTH.—HIS ELECTION.—MODE OF SECURING IT.—HIS CORONATION.—EARLY CAREER.—HIS CHILDREN—DEATH OF HIS ELDEST SON, THE DUKE OF GANDIA.—ABANDONMENT OF THE CHURCH BY HIS SECOND SON, CÆSAR BORGIA, CARDINAL VALENTINO.—THE CARDINAL EXCHANGES THE RED HAT FOR A DUCAL CORONET.

"Afflicta est Respublica."

CIC. *Ep. ad Attic.*

"Excidat illa dies ævo, ne postera credant
Sæcula.

"Lasciola briglia ad ogni sfrenatà licenza."

MURATORI, *Ann.* AD. 1501.

In the night of the last Advent Sunday of the year 1492, Savonarola relates that he had a vision, and in that vision he thought he saw a hand projecting from the heavens holding a sword, with this inscription,—"*The sword of the Lord upon the earth soon and suddenly.*"

A few months later, in August, 1492, Rodrigo Lenzuoli and Borgia, taking the name of Alexander the Sixth, was seated in the chair of St. Peter.

The sword of the Lord had come upon the earth soon and sudden, as it had been seen in the shadows of the night, "when deep sleep is wont to hold men;" and in fear and trembling, we are told, the vision of God's judgment had passed like a spirit before the inner sense of consciousness of that mysterious monk of Ferrara, when the outward organs of sight were sealed, and there was no speculation in them.

The sword of the Lord had come indeed upon the earth, and

with it came upon the Church—the scourge of scandal. Terrible was the retribution which visited the sanctuary, and "soon and sudden" was the visitation.

That scourge of scandal passed over the Church like a swift simoom, and everything was swept away that was *destructible* in its materials; but the edifice resisted even the crimes of Pope Alexander the Sixth.

The Church, if it resembled any human institution, ought to have perished in the catacombs, it ought to have been torn to pieces by wild beasts at Ephesus; and in the arena of the Roman amphitheatres, it ought to have been strangled in the cradle by Nero, and Domitian, and Trajan, and Marc Aurelius, and Severus, and Maximus, and Decius, and Valerian, and Aurelian, and Diocletian. But ten persecutions were not able to crush the young life of Christ's truth out of it.

If it were of human origin, it ought to have been torn to pieces by worse assailants even than the wild beasts of the circus; by the fierce heresies and insidious schisms which sprang up on all sides of that Church, and assailed every doctrine of it in succession.

It ought to have died at the hands of false monks, of faithless ministers, of unworthy prelates, of wicked Pontiffs, had it been a mere establishment made by man and upheld by human power.

Simony, luxury, avarice, the shedding of blood, the perpetration of great crimes against humanity and justice, these ought to have slain the Church, if it did not bear a charmed life, that we look for in vain in the history of all the empires of the earth.

The enormities of Alexander the Sixth ought to have borne down the Church, and buried its doctrines in the ruins of the desecrated sanctuary, if that Church had been an institution set up by man, so contaminated, discredited, and disgraced had been the sacred office of the sovereign ruler of it, by Alexander the Sixth.

It ought to have perished in later times, though it "had ten thousand lives," in the claws of penal law barbarity, on the gib-

bet, on the rack, in the dungeon, in the field, and in the flight, on the mountain side, in the caves and chasms of the rocks, in fens and marshes, with the cry of "havoc wringing in its ears:" in the chase with the blood-hounds of the law yelping at its heels, if that persecuted Church were made of "penetrable stuff," that could have been pierced, or mangled by those "dogs of war," that had been let loose on it, for a period equal in duration to the first cycle of persecution throughout the Roman empire; namely, of three hundred years.

It is now seventeen hundred and eighty-nine years since the first persecution of the Christian Church commenced under Nero.

Since that first persecution in the year 64, to the present time, with brief intervals of repose, the whole life of that Church has been a warfare with impious princes or hostile powers, with corrupting influences or selfish interests, a continuous struggle that had been predicted by our Saviour. Yet it has endured marvellously after so many battles and deadly injuries inflicted on it—miraculously endured, it might be said, if we looked alone at the fall of empires and secular governments all around it. Nor is it too much to say, that its existence to the present day, is one continuous miracle.

"The history of Catholicism," says Macaulay, "strikingly illustrates these observations. During the last seven centuries the public mind of Europe has made constant progress in every department of secular knowledge. But in religion we can trace no constant progress. The ecclesiastical history of that long period is a history of movement to and fro. Four times, since the authority of the Church of Rome was established in Western Christendom, has the human intellect risen up against her yoke. Twice that Church remained completely victorious. Twice she came forth from the conflict bearing the marks of cruel wounds, but with the principle of life still strong within her. When we reflect on the tremendous assaults which she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish."

If the fate of constitutional governments depended on the virtues of the sovereigns who were the chief magistrates of them, England's constitution could hardly have survived her Second Charles, or if it tided over his debaucheries, and happily escaped being stranded in the reigns of the First and Second George, it must have suffered the most serious damage, or have been utterly destroyed, by the vices of the fourth monarch of that name.

The Christian republic and the preservation of the Roman Catholic Church depend still less than any other state on the character of the chiefs of religion, or of its ministers, for the promise of Christ to sustain it to the end of time, is held by Catholics to be a sure guarantee for its preservation.

It is very remarkable, that with all the evil dispositions of Alexander the Sixth, all the crimes committed by him against morality, and justice, and humanity, no doctrine was ever propounded by him, or article of faith put forth, that was contrary to the established tenets of his Church.

"The alleged or real abuses of papal power," says Bishop Kenrick, "form no just ground of objection to this admission, since every divine institution is liable to be abused by human frailty."*

Up to the present time there have been two hundred and fifty-eight Pontiffs; of this number some have been bad men, one of them peculiarly depraved and scandalously profligate; but for one bad man who has sat on the papal throne, who has been unfaithful to his vows, and unworthy of his office, more than ten good men will be found to have filled the chair of St. Peter, true and faithful pastors;—men eminent for holiness of life, and distinguished either for learning, great intellectual power, or ability in the discharge of the duties of their high office.

The thrones of other princes can furnish no dynasties com-

* The Primacy of the Apostolic See Vindicated, p. 22. 8vo. *New York*, 1848.

parable to the line of Pontiffs, in piety, virtue, ability, or goodness.

But the vices of an Alexander the Sixth are considered by many as so many arguments against the claims of the Roman Church to the promise of the divine protection, against all the powers of darkness; as. if Catholics claimed for the rulers of their Church, and ministers of their religion, exemption from the failings of humanity.

Christ promised to the Apostles, that His Spirit would be always with them, and the Gospel they preached has never wanted that holy influence. But these Apostles claimed not to be exempted from the frailties of their fellow-men: one out of the twelve betrayed his Lord and Master, and another of them has left proofs of having fallen into error, or being surprized into the commission of rash and hasty acts, though happily he speedily again rose and returned to his old Apostolic course.

In considering the character of Alexander the Sixth, I do not think the interests of the Roman Catholic Church require that his vices should be palliated, cloaked, shut out of history, denied, or that they should be admitted to be an argument against Catholicity.

Those who think otherwise, in my humble judgment, take too limited a view of the power of their Church, and an erroneous one of the obligations of truth, when they entertain any apprehension for their faith, from the fullest recognition of these obligations, no matter what prestige of men in the highest spiritual places may suffer, from collision with truth carefully sought after, clearly established and promulgated for good objects.

Christ never promised to give pastors to His Church, freed from the infirmities of human nature, impeccable, passionless, and perfect. Roman Catholics, in a word, are required to believe in the infallibility of their Church, but not in the impeccability of its Popes and pastors.

Among the few Popes who have exhibited qualities of an evil nature, which stand out in equal prominence with those of the

temporal sovereigns and magnates of the times in which they lived, Alexander the Sixth claims an unenviable notoriety.

"The most merciful God," says Muratori, "has preserved, and will always preserve, according to His divine promises, His holy Church safe from errors. But on this account, there will not cease to spring up scandals in it from time to time; but woe to the criminal by whom these scandals have come, or will come into the house of the Lord."

These are the last words of Muratori, in reference to the pontificate of Alexander the Sixth:—

"Il benignissimo Iddio ha conservato, e conserverà sempre, secondo le divine sue promesse, illibara dagli errori la chiesa sua santa, né lascèran per questo di nascere in essa di tanto in tanto degli scandali; ma guai a chi reo fu, o farà di questi sconcerti, nesta casa del Signore."*

If the disorders of Rodrigo Lenzuoli, the Spanish officer, and the intimacy with the Roman lady, or in Muratori's words, the "Cortigiana famosa—Vannozia," (who had sojourned in Barcelona too long for her honour and happiness, and the peace of the young cavalier of the house of Lenzuoli,) had ceased when the Pontiff was seated in the chair of St. Peter, they might have been left unrecalled in later ages.

If the unhappy results of that connexion, the claims of five illegitimate children on that young cavalier—the cares for their worldly advancement in life in later years, the crimes for that object to which they led—the fatal indulgence of that unhappy father, his ill-regulated, passionate fondness for them—if these disorders had ceased to be obtruded on the world, when the functions of his sacred office were assumed, the pontificate of Alexander the Sixth (however evil all his antecedents had been) might not have proved the terrible calamity that it has done to religion. When Alexander commenced his pontificate, he was an aged man, then in his sixty-second year, a period of life when the passions are usually subdued, if not entirely sup-

* Muratori, Annali d'Italia, vol. xiv. p. 6. 8vo. *Nap.* 1786.

pressed. Had his conduct then manifested such a change, he might have retrieved a great deal of the obloquy that had been incurred by his career in early life.

But though we may rid our minds without difficulty, or much danger of being misled, by those reports of scandalous immorality, of horrid imputations of incest, which we meet with in so many accounts of those times, too much infamy still remains to be encountered in his history, to admit of the palliations of his conduct, which are attempted in many recent notices of his career.

In 1492, Alexander the Sixth, of the noble house of Lenzuoli and Borgia, in Spain, succeeded Innocent the Eighth in the chair of St. Peter. Twenty-two cardinals went into conclave to choose a successor to Innocent the Eighth, and concurred in the election of Borgia.

Alexander is generally set down, in the histories of his times, as a native of Valentia: and it is commonly imagined that he was born in the city of that name. Such, however, is not the case; he was born in the town of Zativa, at present called San Felipè, in the province of Valentia, as we learn from the "Viage de Espana de Don Antonio Ponz."*

The mother of Alexander the Sixth was the sister of Calixtus the Third, whose family name of Borgia was adopted by Alexander. Onofrio Panvinio, in his life of this pontiff, states:—"The ambition and avarice of some cardinals allowed them to be corrupted, and to give their votes for the election of Alexander, who subsequently shewed his ingratitude to them for

* St. Felipè in ancient times was called Setabis. The Moors changed the name to Zativa, and in the beginning of the eighteenth century it was christened De Novo, and christianized into San Felipe.—See *Viage de Espana*, par D. A. Ponz, tom. iv. p. 270. 12mo. *Madrid*, 1774.

In a small chapel near the high altar, in the cathedral of Valencia, are sculptured the arms of the house of Borgia, dating, according to Ponz, from the times of Calixtus the Third, a member of that family. In this cathedral also is the *Capilla* of another member of the family, of more enviable celebrity than most other members of it, Saint Francis Borgia.—*Vide Viage de Espana*, tom. iv. p. 36.

this infamous and mercenary act, of giving him the tiara in this manner, and foremost amongst them was Ascanius Sforza, suborned without any doubt, and gained over by a large sum of money."*

Most of the suborned cardinals and agents of Alexander, who contributed to his elevation, we are told by Panvinio, met with ruin from the hands of this pontiff. Some were exiled, many incarcerated, and others condemned to violent deaths.

Alexander, in his youth, had applied himself with great success to learning and science, and especially to the study of jurisprudence. He is said to have been very skilful in disentangling legal difficulties and technical subtleties, in judicial proceedings. But all of a sudden he abandoned the law for the profession of his father, that of arms. "Soon after he entered the army, he fell in love with a Roman widow," (we are told by the Abbé Rohrbacher,) "who had come into Spain with her two daughters; at the death of the mother, he became enamoured of one of the daughters named Vannozie, married either then or afterwards to Domingo D'Arignan. He had five children by this union, but he kept this criminal connexion so secret, that it was not discovered for many years."†

The same author goes on to inform us that Alexander's uncle, Calixtus the Third, becoming Pope in 1455, invited him to Rome, and shewing reluctance to accept the invitation, that his uncle sent a prelate into Spain, to conduct him to his court. The offer of considerable benefices in the course of less than a year, had transformed the young Spanish soldier into an archbishop of Valentia, and soon after vice-chancellor of the Roman Church, while in secret he continued his relations with Vannozie, and publicly appeared to be a pious prelate, frequenting churches and hospitals, shewing much liberality towards the poor, and acquiring a very excellent reputation. The Pope, Calixtus, being dead, he was succeeded by Cardinal Picolimini (Eneas Silvius), who took the title of Pius the Second; and in

* Panvinio, in Vita Alless. iv. p. 472.

† Histoire Universelle de l'Eglise Catholique, tome xxii. p. 257.

that pontificate, and the following one of Paul the Second, the fortunes of Cardinal Borgia went on augmenting. Paul's successor, Sixtus the Fourth, appointed various legates, to form a league amongst the Christian princes against the Turks. Cardinal Borgia was sent into Spain, and at the same time Cardinal Carraffa was given the command of the pontifical fleet, united with that of Venice and the king of Naples. But for this spiritual commander some military glory was reserved, though his various legations had proved unsuccessful. The only other success of the legates, on the occasion above referred to, was that of Cardinal Borgia, who looked after his own interests at the court of Spain. He had shone in the courts of Ferdinand, king of Sicily; of Ferdinand, king of Arragon; of Henry, king of Castille; and of Alphonzo, king of Portugal; and wherever he had been, he turned his spiritual authority to his personal advantage; but all the wages of iniquity were lost in a shipwreck, on his return to Rome, by which he also had nearly perished. "Tout le succès de ses négociations, suivant un de ses confréres, le Cardinal de Pavie, fut d'amasser pour son compte, de grandes sommes d'argent dans ces divers royaumes, lesquelles toutefois, en retournant à Rome, il perdit dans un naufrage, ou il manqua lui-même de perir."*

Besides the bad success of the legation with respect to the league, the failure was equally general with regard to the levy of tithes, which Sixtus the Fourth had ordered, to furnish means for the holy war. They were refused in Germany, in France, in England; and "they were refused nearly throughout all Spain," we are told, "on account of the bad conduct of Cardinal Borgia, who, more eager to satisfy his vanity than to fulfil the duties of his legation, left wherever he went proofs only of his ambition, luxury, and avarice; and departed from these countries, according to Cardinal Pavia, as much hated by great and small, as he had been shewn esteem and friendship, on his arrival."

Rohrbacher, speaking of Alexander's culpability, in taking

* Rohrbacher, p. 291.

on him sacred functions, says:—"Il est coupable mais beaucoup moins que nous ne pensons. Il est coupable ne fut-ce pas d'avoir une se mauvaise renommèe. Il est surtout coupable apres une pareille jeunesse, avec de pareils, antecedents d'etre entré dans le sanctuaire. Son oncle Calixte III. est coupable de l'y avoir appellè. Les cardinaux sont coupable de l'avoir placé á la tète de l'eglise. Ou excuse le jeune homme, ou excuse le militaire, ou excuse l'officier Espagnol, mais il n'y a point d'excuse pour le pretre, point d'excuse pour le cardinal, point d'excuse pour le Pape. Et Papes, et cardinaux, ont pu s'en convaincre depuis trois siecles." *

We shall see how far cotemporary history, speaking as if with one voice of Alexander the Sixth, and his career in the pontificate, will bear out the assertion,—"Il est coupable mais beaucoup moins que nous le pensions."

In Corio's admirable work, "L'Historia di Milano," † the election of Alexander the Sixth is more largely treated of than in any other history of those times.

Notwithstanding his strong attachment to the interests of his own country, and his own sovereign, Corio's work is peculiarly valuable, as being the production of a cotemporary of Alexander the Sixth, and also of Savonarola, of whom an excellent notice is given in his History. Corio was born in 1439, of a noble Milanese family; he was selected by Louis Sforza to write the history of Milan. The *active* part that the Sforzas played in the affairs of Italy, in those of Florence and Rome, particularly in the fifteenth century, enabled the dukes of Milan to collect abundant authentic materials for a history of those times, and with such materials the great work of Corio was composed. He died in 1500, and the first edition of his work appeared in folio in 1503.

Corio says, that Alexander had gained the Pontificate by buying

* Hist. Univ. de l'Eglise Cath. par L'Abbe Rohrbacher, tome xxii. p. 322. 8vo. *Paris.*

† Historia de Milano, Scritta del Excell. Oratore M. Bernardino Corio, parte 7ma. p. 451. 4to. *Ven.* 1554.

over to his interest the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza and others, at a most enormous cost of treasures and promises.

"At his coronation," observes Corio, "a still more lavish expenditure was incurred, and the magnificence of the ceremonial was unparalleled. But that magnificence was over-clouded by the very efforts of the obsequious dignitaries of the Church, and magnates of the court, to give greater effect than usual to the exuberant manifestations of joy, on an occasion that was deemed by them so auspicious. The explosions of fireworks, and discharges of firearms, in the procession, from St. Peter's to the Lateran, were so incessant, that in the midst of the pomp of the ceremonial, and the accompanying recitations of prayers, that were almost drowned by the overwhelming sounds of trumpets, and numerous other instruments employed on this portentous occasion, the very atmosphere was dimmed and obscured by the thick smoke that was emitted from combustibles exploded in the Piazza of St. Peter's, where twenty squadrons of armed men, with their lances poised, under the command of a chief of the Orsino family, were posted, to accompany the Pontiff and his cortége to the church of St. John of Lateran."

In the lugubriously solemn procession to the Lateran, the Pontifical cortége was involved in such darkness from the fumes of gunpowder, and other combustible materials, that the performers in gorgeous vestments and apparel—"i cardinali et baroni magnificamente ornati"—were scarcely discernible to one another. There was something to astound in this obscurity, and more especially in the vicinity of a certain gallery, that was constructed close to the statue of the Saint, where "tanta caligine era che quasi non se vedeva l'aere; in forma che tutti pareano esser divenuti ciechi et storni. Et cosi ciecamente fecero la santissimo coronatione."*

Corio details at great length the magnificence of the suites of the several cardinals and barons on this occasion, all of which may be compendiously resumed into a single observation—that the magnificence of a coronation ceremonial in Rome, was never

* Hist. de Milano, 7ma. p. 451, *Par.*

surpassed by that which took place at the solemn consecration of Alexander the Sixth, whose pontificate was the greatest calamity that was ever inflicted on the Roman Catholic Church.

In the course of the procession, the Jews presented themselves near the bridge of San Angelo, bearing their laws, surrounded with a great number of lighted tapers, and praying his holiness to confirm these privileges.

They being asked what use they made of those Jewish laws, and having replied to that question, the Pope in reprehension said to them, "they did not understand those laws. Nevertheless, he gave them license that they might live according to those laws, and in conformity with the privileges accorded to them to live in the midst of Christians."*

As the cortége entered the Castle of St. Angelo, the walls were lined with soldiers, banners were flying, salutes were fired, and one great standard was displayed with a motto on one side in golden letters:—

"*Divi Alexandri Magni Coronatio;*"

and on the other side:—

"Qui se suis Actionibus Moderator Facilè, Ac Parvo cum Labore, ad Omnia Pervenit."†

Poor Humanity! in all times, in all climes, in all garbs, the same tendencies to servility and adulation, the same weaknesses, the same meannesses are to be encountered.

The possession of power and patronage, the great fact of success, and ability to satisfy the great cravings of cupidity—the acquisition of gain or glory, in the service of a new prince—these are the considerations on which estimates are formed, and the reasons on account of which large expectations are formed, of the characters of the "Divi Alexandri Magni" of this world.

Alexander the Sixth passed into the castle of St. Angelo under a triumphal arch, adorned with emblems of all the virtues in gold and silver, with embroidered figures of great beauty, with children like angels mounted on the cornice of the arch,

* Hist. de Milano, Par. 7. p. 451. † Ib.

reciting Latin verses in honour of the Pontiff as he passed on, with streamers on his right hand inscribed with the word *oriens*, others on his left with the word *occidens*, and near the former a Moorish child dressed in his oriental costume, and by the latter another child attired after the manner of the western nations.

And under the arch, the eyes of Alexander had to encounter a banner with the words—"*Liberalitas. Roma. Justitia*:" while in several niches on either side of the passage, nymphs appropriately apparelled — and it might be added, appropriately placed—were to be seen. There was a representation in this passage of Rome triumphant over the universe, and the Papal crown in the hand of the statue Roma, with an ox in the act of pasturing, and on the other side, an allegorical painting, with the motto—"*Pudicitia, Florentia, Charitas et Florentia!*"

There was no "mischief mallikin" in this motto, with the word "*Pudicitia*" in large letters of gold staring Alexander the Sixth in the face; it was a simple servile act of sycophancy and idolatry of power, confounding all sentiments that discriminate between right and wrong, vice and virtue, purity and sensuality.

There was a second triumphal arch under which the new Pontiff had to pass, and beneath the arch, on a beautiful blue ground, there was an inscription in golden letters, a verse in two lines of hyperbolical commendation, transcending in superlative eulogy, not only the bounds of propriety, but of piety itself:

> "Cæsare magna fuit nunc Roma est Maxima Sextus,
> Regnat Alexander, ille vir, iste Deus."

Six other mottos were conspicuously flaunted, "in questo pallagio ornato con feste tondo et in campo azzurro littere d'oro." Some of these inscriptions were of a very heathenish character, with several references to Jupiter, but none to Jesus in them.

One of these inscriptions was in the following terms:

"Alexandro invictissimo, Alexandro pientissimo, Alexandro magnificientissimo, Alexandro in omnibus maximo honor et gloria."

The third was in these words:

"Sancta fuit nullo major pax tempore, tuta omnia sunt, agnus sub bove et angue jacet."*

There was a third triumphal arch in this locality, "adorned with military weapons, festoons of laurel, marine monsters, and other magnificent things." In other parts of the city there were several similar arches.

There was a fountain of marvellous construction, near one of the triumphal arches, with an ox, having jets of water from the horns, mouth, eyes, nostrils, and ears. Finally, Alexander the Sixth returned to the palâce of the Pontiffs—entered on the duties of the Pontificate with all imaginable mildness, and administered his office with all possible brutality: "Entro nel Ponteficato Alessandro VI., mansueto come bove et l'ha amministrato come Leone."†

Guicciardini's account of the career of Alexander the Sixth should be read in his own words, to form any just opinion of the exception taken to it by two writers of very opposite sentiments in religious matters—Voltaire, the infidel, and Rohrbacher, the strenuous advocate of Catholicity. "Alexander the Sixth," says Guicciardini, "was an ancient cardinal, and one of the most considerable prelates in the court of Rome. His election was owing in some measure to the disputes which arose between the two cardinals, heads of factions, Ascanio Sforza and Giuliano, of San Pietro in Vincolo, but was chiefly due to simony, unparalleled in that age, for he bought scandalously—partly with money, partly with promises of offices and benefices of his own, which were most amply endowed—many votes of the cardinals, who, regardless of Gospel precepts, were not ashamed to sell the privilege of trafficking, in the name of a Divine authority, in the sacred treasures intrusted to them, and that in the most exalted seat of the Christian religion. The Cardinal Ascanio, in this abominable traffic, took a leading part in gaining over many of the cardinals, but not more by persuasion and intreaties

* Hist. di Milano, parte 7ma. p. 452. † Ibid. p. 450.

than by his own example; for he, being corrupted by an insatiable appetite for riches, bargained, for the price of so much wickedness, for the office of vice-chancellor, one of the most important of the Court of Rome, for churches also, castles, and even the Pope's own palace in Rome, filled with most costly furniture. But he could not escape the Divine retribution, nor the infamy and detestation in which acts like his are justly held by their fellow-men; for people were filled with fear and horror at an election achieved by such foul means, and the more so, on account of the nature and qualities of the person elected, which were known to many; and to one in particular, among others, were these things so well known, that the King of Naples, although in public he concealed his sentiments in regard to Alexander, he expressed his sorrow with tears, (which he was not wont to shed, even at the death of his children,) at the election of a Pontiff whose creation would prove most calamitous to Italy and the entire Christian republic: a prognostic truly worthy of the discrimination of Ferdinand; for in Alexander the Sixth (as he would be called) there was singular acuteness and sagacity, excellence in council, marvellous powers of persuasion, and, in all weighty matters, incredible concentration of ideas and astuteness. But these great qualities were far surpassed by his vices, depraved morals, insincerity, shamelessness, truthlessness, faithlessness, impiety, insatiable avarice, immoderate ambition, cruelty most barbarous, and excessive solicitude, by whatsoever means were available, to exalt his children, who were numerous; and, amongst them, one, as if fitting instruments for bad counsels might not be wanting to him, in some respects as detestable as himself." *

The one referred to of the unhappy offspring of Alexander, we are informed in a note, was Cæsar Borgia. Guiccardini mentions only four children: Francisco, Duke of Gandia, Cæsar, duke of Valentino, Guiffre, Prince of Squillace, and Lucretia, who, after several marriages, died Duchess of Ferrara.

* La Historia d'Italia, Di. M. Francesco Guicciardini, lib. i. p. 2. Ed. 4to. *Ven.* 1599.—See Appendix, for original passage.

But Rohrbacher says there was a fifth child of Alexander, whose name remains unknown.

Alexander the Sixth had done by his son, Cæsar Borgia, as his uncle, Calixtus the Third, had done by him—determined to turn the spiritual advantages of his position to a good account for his family. Cæsar was given to the Church, and two of its highest dignities, episcopal and cardinal, were bestowed on him by his father; whilst the eldest son, the Duke of Gandia, was destined for the enjoyment of the highest temporal honours, titles, and territorial advantages.

The Pope proposed great plans for the aggrandizement of this son; but God disposed of events, which speedily and suddenly brought all those projects to an end.

The young nobleman was murdered, and his own brother, the cardinal, was strongly suspected of the assassination. Indeed, nearly all cotemporary history seems to entertain hardly any doubt on the subject.

Guicciardini gives the following graphic account of the effects of the murder of the Duke of Gandia on the mind of his father, Alexander the Sixth, in the midst of many disorders in the ecclesiastical states, and public calamities that then, for the first time, fell upon him, and which he endeavoured to banish from his thoughts: "But he could not fly the domestic calamities which then afflicted his house, with examples so tragical of the effects of lust and horrible cruelty, in every barbarous form. From the beginning of his Pontificate, he had designed to bestow all the temporal advantages in his power on the Duke of Gandia, his eldest son. The Cardinal of Valencia (Cæsar Borgia), who, with a mind totally alienated from the sacerdotal profession, aspired to the command of the army, could not bear that this place should be occupied by his brother; and impatient moreover at that brother having a greater share than he had in the affections of a lady loved by both, excited by lust and ambition (prime motives in all great villanies), caused him to be put to death one night that he walked alone in the streets of Rome, and had his body cast into the Tiber.

"The Pope was afflicted beyond measure at the death of his son, the Duke of Gandia, feeling it the more, that no father ever lavished so much love on his sons; *and he felt this cruel blow of fortune the more, because from his youth upwards to that time, he had been uniformly prosperous.* And so affected was he by this catastrophe, that in the consistory he exhibited the greatest distress, and with tears deplored bitterly his misfortunes, and accused himself many times of his own acts and mode of life, that he had hitherto maintained. He protested with much earnestness that he wished to govern his future life by another rule, and with other morals, calling on some of the cardinals to reform their habits likewise, and the conduct of the court. He persisted in this course some days, till the real facts as to the author of the murder beginning to be revealed, which up to that time were doubtful, for the deed had been ascribed to the Cardinal Ascanio and to the Orsini,—his good intentions and his tears were abandoned. He returned with more frenzy than ever to his old modes of thinking and acting, which had been the habits of his life up to that time."*

There are few passages in Italian history of more terrible interest than the preceding, or more calculated to excite grave considerations, and humble views of the worldly felicity which long-continued prosperity is supposed to lead to.

On the occasion of the death of the Duke of Gandia, Raynaldus informs us that Alexander's purposed change went much further than a reformation of his manners, or of those of his court. We are told by this author:—"He conceived the design of abdicating the papacy, and intimated his project to King Ferdinand, of Naples, who replied to him that this matter deserved grave consideration, and that he should defer taking any step, at least, till his affliction had abated. Moreover, he named a commission of six cardinals, to labour at the re-establishment of ecclesiastical discipline. If no result came of this, it is at least manifest that this man, so decried, was not insensible."†

* Guicciardini, Hist. d'Italia, lib. iii. p. 96.

† Raynald. 1497, N. 4-8, ap. Rohrbacher, tom. xxii. p. 334.

This is, unquestionably, the most redeeming trait in the whole career of Alexander. There was one corner in his heart not yet wholly petrified and insensible to every emotion of natural feeling, nor inaccessible to the voice of conscience in the hour of affliction.

God only knows what this man might have proved, had his career not been, from his earliest years to the period of that catastrophe, one continued course of prosperity.

He had had no crosses in life, no sickness, no sorrows, no misfortunes, in the worldly sense of that word, to subdue and to soften his dispositions—to remind him of eternity, and to wean him from the world.

The crimes to which Alexander was driven by his immoderate and ill-regulated affection for his children were continuous, and seemed linked together in one long chain of enormities, to the perpetration of which he was impelled, as if destiny had ordained them for the punishment of the transgressions which had given those children to him; or rather, for the punishment of the impiety that led him to seek the place he profaned so scandalously in the Church.

In 1492, Alexander had entered into an alliance with Alphonzo, King of Naples, in virtue of which the latter was bound to bestow several valuable benefices on Cæsar Borgia, whom the Pope had lately created cardinal.

"Alexander," says Guicciardini, "in order to qualify Cæsar for the purple, had, by false witnesses, to prove him to be a legitimate child of another gentleman, it not being customary to promote bastards to that dignity." This act led to enormities still greater.

The Abbé Rohrbacher, with all his anxiety to rescue the character of Alexander the Sixth from all the obloquy attaching to it that could possibly be removed, and to bear out the unfounded assertion that it was the treachery of the noble families of Rome who were feudatories of the Holy See, which had encouraged Charles the Eighth in 1494 to invade Italy, is obliged to acknowledge that when Charles entered Rome, and Alexander shut himself up in the castle of San Angelo, "two cardinals only followed

him into the castle, while eighteen others, having gone over to the King Charles, wished to bring that prince to seize the Pope, and to cause proceedings to be instituted against him, in order to effect his deposition from the pontificate, on the ground of a pretended intrusion and his scandalous life. But the king, more wise than those prelates, contented himself with entering into arrangements with the pontiff." *

The nobles, in the opinion of Rohrbacher, who went over to the king were traitors, but the cardinals were only—" prelates not so wise as the king,"—who had not only gone over to the French, but had advised the deposition of the Pontiff. But why was the king more wise than those prelates? One of the principal grounds on which John the Twenty-third was deposed by the Council of Constance, was, that he had bought the pontificate. Alexander the Sixth had done the same, and his life was infinitely more scandalous than that of John the Twenty-third.

The Abbé Rohrbacher has very gentle words for infamy in high places, and very galling ones for all opposition to it. But what can be expected from a writer who thus treats of the atrocities of Alexander the Sixth, and the denunciation of the scandals he had brought on religion?—"*La conduite d'Alexandre VI.* n'etait pas bien edifiánte: Savonarola comme un autre Cham revelait publiquement l'ignominie de son pere."†

In the abbé's judgment, it would seem the grievous sin in this case was not in the ignominy of Alexander, but in Savonarola's revelation of it.

Were the cardinals (one of them subsequently a pontiff) who denounced the wickedness of Alexander to the French king, so many other Chams likewise, for thus revealing the ignominy of their father?

The simple answer to this defence of Alexander the Sixth is, that the researches of the Italian historians, Guicciardini, Denina, and Nardi, and the later researches of Roscoe, have plainly shewn that Charles the Eighth never would have pushed his

* Rohrbacher, tome xxii. p. 351. † Ibid. p. 332.

claim on Naples to the extremity of an invasion, if it had not been for the strenuous efforts made by a large number of the principal cardinals to induce him to remove the unworthy pontiff, Alexander the Sixth, from the papal throne.

On this point, Guicciardini's statement can leave no doubt. It is to the following effect:—"The Pope, full of anxiety and fear—'pieno d'incredibile timor è anxieta,'—had retired into the castle of St. Angelo, accompanied by two of the cardinals, Battista Orsini, and Ulivieri Caraffa, a Neapolitan. But the Cardinals del Vincola, Ascanio, those of the Colonna family, and Savello, with many others, resorted to the French king, and prayed him to remove from the pontifical see a Pope loaded with such vices as rendered him odious and detestable to the whole world, and to procure another election. They represented that it would not be less glorious for him to free the Church of God from the tyranny of a wicked Pope, than it was for Pepin and Charlemagne, his ancestors, to free the Popes of a holy life from the persecutions of their unjust oppressors. They laboured to convince him that this was not less necessary for his own safety than desirable for his glory."*

Elsewhere, the same author states that the chief cause of Alexander's consternation at the approach of the French was, that Charles would be prevailed on to call a council, and to proceed to his degradation and expulsion from the pontificate, at the instance of Cardinal Rovera, San Pietro in Vincola, and many other cardinals, his enemies—"Accresceva il terrore de vedergli (Il Re) appresso con autorita non piecola il Cardinale de San Pietro in Vincola e molti altre Cardinale nimici suoi.... temeva che il re non voltasse l'animo a reformare come gia eomminciava à divulgarsi, le cose della chiesa."†

We find in the works of several of the Italian historians, who treat of the affairs of Italy in the fifteenth century, many references to those efforts that were made by princes and by prelates, conjointly by some of the highest dignitaries of the

* Guicciardini, La Historia d'Italia, liv. i. p. 35. † Ibid. p. 34.

church, and by one of them, then a cardinal, who succeeded Alexander in the pontificate, to depose that Pontiff, and to rid the church of the scandal of his conduct, and the calamity of his government.

Corio says, that "Charles, the most Christian king, had concerted with some other powers, and with several of the most eminent ecclesiastics, to deprive Alexander the Sixth of the pontifical dignity—not only by the employment of force, but of moral means—inasmuch as it was intended to convoke a council, which might for just reasons pronounce his deposition, on the ground alone of his having bought the pontifical dignity, so that he could not be considered a true pastor of the Holy Church. And if needs were, it was resolved to proceed on other grounds, on the fact of his notorious libertinism, of the crime ascribed to him of being a party to the deaths of some persons, and of disbelieving in the divine origin of the Apostolic See; and further, he was accused by the King Charles of heresy, of conforming to the faith of the sect of the *Marrana infidels.*"*

The qualifications of the King of France ("most Christian," by the courtesy of Rome) to pronounce judgment on the faith or morals of a pontiff, were more than doubtful. But that eminent prelates and dignitaries sought his aid and co-operation for the execution of their project to depose Alexander the Sixth, seems to admit of no doubt.

Carlo Denina, in his Italian History,† speaks in the following terms of the intention of some of the leading prelates and cardinals to depose Alexander the Sixth.

"The Pope (at the approach of King Charles and the French army) fled to the castle of St. Angelo, troubled in mind and agitated, especially at hearing that in the suite of the King was Julian di Rovero, Cardinal of San Pietro in Vincolo (subsequently Pope Julius the Third), his great enemy. Alexander

* Corio, Historia di Milano, p. 462.

† Delle Revoluzione d'Italia, par Denina, lib. xix. p. 15. in tom. iv. 12mo. *Ven.* 1779.

had no doubt but that the Cardinal was there to counsel Charles to every extreme measure against his person. In fact, the Cardinal Rovero did not fail to stimulate the King to institute proceedings against Alexander, as a simoniacal pontiff, and most unworthy of that dignity, to depose Alexander, and to elect another Pope. But either the feelings of veneration of Charles towards the Holy See, or more probably the persuasion and advice of William Bressonet, Bishop of St. Malo, his Majesty's principal minister, to whom Alexander had promised the dignity of Cardinal, restrained the King from so mischievous a determination, one which would have exposed the Church to a most pernicious schism, in times already too calamitous for religion. But negociations having been entered into, and concluded, the Pope came forth from the castle of St. Angelo, and he appeared in public and in private with the King, with the customary ceremony observed in such congresses."*

Roscoe observes, "that Benedetti, in his Fatto D'Arme del Tarro, asserts that Charles was invited into Italy by Ludovico Sforza, *Ercole, Duke of Ferrara*, Cardinal Juliano della Rovere, and Lorenzo de Medici (son of Piero Francesco), assigning as a reason for it, which strongly confirms the idea that Alexander was uniformly hostile to the measure, that the aversion in which the Pope was held by some of the cardinals, induced them to wish for a change in the pontificate."†

A case is endeavoured to be made out for Alexander the Sixth by Audin, in his "Histoire de Leon X." He says:—

Some weeks after the death of Alexander's predecessor, according to Infessura, more than two hundred homicides were committed within the walls of Rome, by two or three families, who had the privilege of shedding blood with impunity, for Rome belonged to them. The long sojourn of the Popes at Avignon, the schism that had broken out upon their return to Italy, the scandalous disputes of the fathers at the Council of

* Denina, Delle Rivoluz. d'Italia, lib. xix. p. 16. Vide Appendix for original passage.

† See Life of Leo X. vol. i. p. 452.

Basle, had admirably served the purposes of the great vassals of the Holy See. Sheltered from punishment, these feudatories had constituted themselves independent sovereigns. It is thus that Malatesta had appropriated Cessene; the Riario family, Imola and Forli; the Manfredi, Faenza; the Sforza family, Pessaro; the Bentivoglio family, Bologna; the Baglioni, Perugia."

"When Charles the Eighth," continues Audin, "invaded Italy, most of these great lords came to offer their services to the conqueror. It is not the fault of Alexander that Charles crossed the Alps. We know now, thanks to the learned researches of Rosmini, that the Pope tried in vain to hinder the alliance of Lodovico Sforza with Charles the Eighth. He proposed to Sforza a triple alliance with Rome, Milan, and Naples, which certainly would have rendered the invasion impossible. Two powerful houses hastened by their defection the occupation of Rome, namely, the Colonna's and the Orsini, and delivered up by a base treachery the patrimony of St. Peter to the French. In all emergencies the Orsini and Colonna's were sure to find a refuge in the state of Venice, for the policy of that republic was ever interested in having Rome under the government of a weak and infirm pope.

"Alexander the Sixth dissimulated his resentment, and waited patiently the moment for vengeance. Cæsar Borgia was the instrument of whom he made use to punish the felony of his vassals....."*

A writer yet more recent than Audin, a French ecclesiastic—Monsieur L'Abbé Jorry—has published a work which he has entitled, "Histoire du Pape Alexandre VI.," with the following significative motto:—*Arracher l'opprimè des mains du Calomniateur.*

It should have been entitled an eulogy on the character and career of the Borgias—father and son. This work is published by a religious society for "the propagation of good books,"—la

* Audin, tom. i. p. 293.

Societè de Saint Victor, with the approbation of Cardinal de la Tour d'Auvergne.

The reverend gentleman who has written this book—as he informs us at the close of it—"to render some services to the holy cause of truth"—extols the pontificate of Alexander the Sixth as *dans un sens*, a prelude to the great reign of Leo the Tenth, and a period of encouragement that led to the resuscitation of the arts. "He (Alexander) occupied himself above all things with the encouragement of the arts." .... "In his hours of recreation, he seemed to forget completely public affairs, but he always conducted himself so, as not to weaken his intellectual faculties."*

Monsieur L'Abbé, in his zeal for the interests of the sacred cause of truth, tells the world—

"But even if Alexander the Sixth had all the vices with which he had been charged, those vices would be counterbalanced, *to a certain extent*, jusqu'a un certain point, by the brilliant qualities which distinguished him."

Among the calumniators who differed, to a certain extent, in opinion with those who thought that the brilliant qualities of Alexander the Sixth counterbalanced any portion of the vices imputed to him, was the monk, Girolamo Savonarola.

He had given offence to the man of the brilliant qualities, and the latter had said of the begging friar, who gave him more trouble than any prince: "Melior est bellum cum magno principe gerere, quam cum uno ex fratrum mendicantium ordine."

It is needless to say, the historian of Alexander the Sixth, zealous for the sacred cause of truth and the character of Alexander the Sixth, Monsieur L'Abbé Jorry, under the auspices of a religious society, and with the approbation of the Cardinal Bishop of Arras, thinks less favourably of Savonarola than he does of the Sixth Alexander. This reverend historian tells us, that "the religious demagogue, by his invectives against vices in the first place, then against persons, had made himself numerous enemies. On the other hand, there was *some* reason to

* Hist. d'Alexandre, p. 182.

suspect the orthodoxy of his sentiments in matters of faith. There was frequently to be noticed in his sermons, certain propositions little conformable to truth. On that account he had enemies amongst the faithful clergy."*

The abbé, ever zealous for the sacred cause of truth, then proceeds to inform his readers, that "the religious demagogue trampled under foot his own legislation, constituted himself a tyrant in the bosom of a city which he was to have put in surety for ever against all tyranny. There was nothing more required to raise a thousand arms against him." The Abbé Jorry, it is to be presumed, really believes that in thus writing of Alexander the Sixth and of Savonarola, he has served the sacred cause of truth. It might have been better for the abbé, however, if he had never learned to read or write, than to make use of knowledge in defence of guilt that has done deadly injury to religion, and in condemnation of innocence and virtue that have been oppressed and borne down by injustice. In palliation of the very worst atrocities of Cæsar Borgia, the Abbé Jorry has employed language calculated to confound all notions of right and wrong. In relation to the frightful treachery and massacre of Cæsar's victims at Seneguglia, the abbé finds only, "les mœurs et les usages du temps." . . . . "Leurs mort fut reglèe par la justice de l'epoque."

Elsewhere the abbé speaks of the butcheries of Cæsar Borgia as executions—"Selon les lois de la guerre."

* Histoire du Pape Alexandre VI., par Mons. L'Abbe Jorry. *Plancy*, 1851.

CHAPTER X.

THE REFORM OF SAN MARCO.—FRA GIROLAMO CALLED ON TO PREACH DURING THE LENT IN BOLOGNA, IN 1493.—OFFENCE GIVEN BY THE PREACHER TO THE WIFE OF JOHN BENTIVOGLIO.—ATTEMPT ON THE LIFE OF FRA GIROLAMO.—RETURN TO FLORENCE.—RESUMPTION OF THE LABOURS OF HIS MISSION.—REFORM COMMENCED OF HIS ORDER.—BEGINNING OF THE QUARREL WITH THE COURT OF ROME.—OFFER MADE TO HIM OF A CARDINAL'S HAT.—1493 TO 1494.

> "That angel of the world doth make distinction
> Of place 'twixt high and low."
>
> SHAK. *Cym.* act iv.

IN 1493 Savonarola occupied himself exclusively for a considerable time with the reform of his Order, especially of his own convent. He sent two of the most able theologians of his brethren, Fra P. A. Rinuccini, a Florentine, and Fra Domenico (Bonviccini), of Pescia, to the Pope, Alexander the Sixth, to endeavour to get the sanction of his Holiness for the proposed reform.

One of the principal objects sought for, was permission for San Marco, and some other Dominican convents, to erect themselves into a separate congregation, including only natives in its communities, leaving to the Dominican province the other convents of the Order, but earnestly seeking to be separated from the jurisdiction of the Lombard Congregation.

The Lombard Congregation sent agents to Rome to oppose the application. Princes and prelates, cardinals and ambassadors, threw themselves into the contention which this subject had occasioned. The Cardinal Caraffa, general of the Domini-

can Order, then much in the confidence of the Pope, had long urged in vain on Alexander the suit of Fra Girolamo. On one occasion, when the capricious Pontiff refused to attend a consistory, and dismissed the assembled cardinals, Cardinal Caraffa, using the great freedom which the familiar nature of these terms of intercourse permitted, took the ring off the Pope's finger, and signed and sealed the long-prepared brief of separation for the Florentine Dominicans, after having fruitlessly pressed his Holiness for its ratification. Then we are told the Holy Father seemed not to be conscious of the matter, or rather to connive at an act which interested him very little.

Those who are familiar with Burchard's Diary will be reminded of many simulated slumberings and syncopes of the Pontiff, at various ceremonies, on important occasion

When the cardinal put *the duly executed brief* in the hands of Fra Girolamo's agents, he said to them, "Lose no time in carrying out the good work you have proposed, *for it is only by the goodness of God I obtained this brief.*"* Nothing was said by the good Father of the little liberty taken with the finger of his Holiness on the occasion.

Burlamacchi informs us of the timely arrival of the two Dominicans with the Pontifical brief in Florence. The Provincial of the Dominican Order in Lombardy had already taken steps to remove Savonarola from San Marco, in his anger at the efforts made in Rome for the separation of the Florentine convents from his congregation, and his inability to prevent the proposed separation. A few days before the expedited brief had reached the Prior of San Marco, he sent a formal and peremptory order to the Superior of the Convent, in Fiesole, to be communicated to Savonarola, and some others of the brethren of his convent, commanding them to quit San Marco altogether, and to retire from Florence, on pain of excommunication.

Accident had delayed the communication of this order for nine days; when eventually it was presented to Savoranola, he

* Hist. de Sav. par M. Carle, p. 126.

was no longer subject to the jurisdiction of the Lombard Provincial.

The reform proceeded, and extended to the Dominican convents in Fiesole, Pisa, Prato, and Sienna. A chapter-general was held in Florence this same year, 1493, and the Prior of San Marco was invested with the dignity of Vicar-General of the congregation.

The community of San Marco augmented so considerably, that the Prior was obliged to seek for additional accommodation for his brethren. The republic liberally conceded, for the use of the community, a portion of the building called the Sapienza.

The series of sermons on Genesis, which Fra Giralomo had been preaching in Florence, was interrupted in 1493, Fra Girolamo having undertaken to preach during the Lent in Bologna. The fullest account of a singular incident which took place at one of his sermons, in the course of his preaching on that occasion at Bologna, is given by Burlamacchi.

"At the commencement of his preaching in that city there was not a very large concourse of people, abstaining as he did from matter which merely gratified curiosity, and confining himself to subjects that were useful, and likely to produce good effects, and tend towards the salvation of souls.

"He expounded the Sacred Scriptures with great simplicity, retrenching everything that was superfluous (in style or comment).

"Therefore, by the wise of this world, he was accounted (there) a poor simple man, 'a preacher for women,' 'uomo semplice e predicatore de donne.' It happened at this time that the wife of John Bentivoglio, the tyrant lord of Bologna, attended his sermons, and always came into the church when the sermon had been commenced, accompanied usually by a great number of gentlewomen and young ladies—'*gentildonne e damigelle*'—who greatly disturbed not only the congregation but the preacher also, who, on several occasions, was obliged to pause in his discourse until the disturbance had ceased.

"On this account, on the first occasion of the disturbance, he

begged, with mildness, of those ladies in general who attended his preaching; that they would all endeavour to be present at the beginning of the sermon, in order to avoid any more giving disturbance while the word of God was preached. But his request not being at all attended to, the very proud woman (of whom mention has been made) persisting still in coming into church as she was wont to do, the preacher one morning in particular said, in a very courteous manner, while she was proceeding to her place, 'My lady *madonna*, you would do what is pleasing to God, and also to me, to come into church at the beginning of the sermon, so that neither the congregation nor myself should be disturbed.' But all expostulation was in vain. On the third occasion of a similar interruption, seeing the same lady walk in in her accustomed manner with great pomp, feeling himself inflamed with zeal (for the honour of religion), he cried out in a loud voice, 'Behold the evil one, behold the evil one who comes to perturb (the preaching of) the word of God—*Ecco il demonio! ecco il demonio che viene a perturbare il vertio di Dio.*'

"On hearing these words, the haughty woman, infuriated, having apprised her husband of what had taken place, prevailed on him to dispatch two of his satellites to assassinate the father, even in the pulpit; but the Lord, who was his helper, did not permit those machinations to be carried into effect.

"The preacher having returned to his cell, the offended lady, still full of anger and rage, employed two other agents, more wicked than the former, to put him to death. When they came to the convent gate, the porter, named Fra Dionysio (having spoken with them), went to call Fra Girolamo, telling him there were two soldiers of the signore who enquired for him, and therefore he (Fra Dionysio) advised him to be on his guard against some treachery.

"Fra Girolamo answered, that all his trust was in God, and therefore he might admit those men freely.

"Being therefore admitted, when they came into his presence, he asked them, with perfect composure, what good news they had

for him; and they, feeling their hearts moved and their intentions altered, with great respect said to him, "Our lady sent us to your reverence, to know if you had need of anything; and, if so, that she was most willing to provide for your necessities."

To which the father replied suitably, giving them thanks, and with courteous words dismissed them. So striking an example of boldness (in the discharge of his sacred duties) began to procure a large attendance at his sermons; so many came, that the church could hardly contain the numbers. And at length, coming to the conclusion of his course of sermons, he said publicly, "This night I will take the road for Florence with my slender staff and my wooden flask, and I will repose at Pianoro: if any person want aught of me, let him come before I set out. *Nevertheless the solemnity of my death is not to be celebrated at Bologna—but elsewhere.*" And so it came to pass.*

In proof of his humility, Burlamacchi states that the archbishopric of Florence was pressed on him and refused by him, and that the cardinal's hat was offered to him on two occasions, and was likewise declined by him.

The first occasion was when the Venetians, treating of a confederation with the Florentines, offered in vain to procure that dignity for him if he would use his good offices in their favour.

The second occasion was when Alexander the Sixth made him the offer of that dignity, on condition of his abstaining from preaching of future events, and retracting some things he had said. But he did the opposite of all that was expected of him.†

Dr. Hafe, in his remarkable work of "The New Prophets," states that Alexander the Sixth offered a cardinal's hat to Savonarola, but the latter replied—"he desired no other hat than the martyr's blood-stained crown."‡

* Burlamacchi, Vit. de Sav. p. 536. † Ibid. p. 538.

‡ Neue Propheten, p. 125.

We are even told by Hafe, that Alexander wished Savonarola to come to Rome to prophesy for him. But Savonarola excused himself, and declined visiting the Eternal City. .... The only effect the intimated desire of his Holiness seems to have had on Fra Girolamo, was to incite him to more active measures to bring the scandals of Alexander's Pontificate to a close.

CHAPTER XI.

PREDICTED INVASION OF ITALY BY CHARLES THE EIGHTH OF FRANCE.—ARRIVAL OF CHARLES AND HIS ARMY IN FLORENCE.—FLIGHT OF THE MEDICI.—RESTORATION OF THE REPUBLIC.—THE COMMENCEMENT OF SAVONAROLA'S INFLUENCE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS.—SUCCESSFUL RESULTS OF HIS EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC, AND SUBSEQUENT MEDIATION WITH THE KING AT FLORENCE TO PREVENT THE SACKING OF THE CITY.—DEPARTURE OF THE FRENCH FROM FLORENCE.—CLOSE OF THE YEAR 1494.

THE coming into Italy of the French sovereign with an army had been predicted by Savoranola in 1484, in a sermon which he preached in Brescia; and in 1494, in several of his sermons, that coming event was referred to, as will be found in several passages of the sermons contained in the "Compendio delle Revelazioni."

Charles the Eighth in those predictions is spoken of as Cyrus, whom the Lord would lead by the right hand, in the words of Isaiah. This new Cyrus will cross the mountains, sweep all Italy, and take possession of it in a few days, without shedding a drop of blood. It will be in vain, he tells his countrymen, to fancy themselves secure in fortresses and in rocky places, because they will be taken without difficulty.

It was not, however, till almost the middle of 1494 that the preacher, explaining the book of Genesis, made especial application of the menaces which preceded the universal deluge, and when the people of Florence were plunged into alarm by a particular sermon, wherein, with new energy and earnestness, he called on them to provide against the coming calamities—

"Just men," he exclaimed, "enter the Ark! Behold the cataracts of heaven are about to fall. They come! I see the plains inundated, the mountains disappear in the middle of the waters. Behold, my brethren—behold the day of the vengeance of the Lord!"

Burlamacchi says, in the preceding expositions, which occupied a considerable period, those who attended the sermons were often surprised that the subject of the construction of the Ark took up so much time, and that it seemed as if Savonarola could never arrive at that text where it is said, "*Ego adducam aquas diluvii*," till the French monarch with his invading army had actually entered Italy.*

Guicciardini truly observes, that Fra Girolamo, "having publicly preached the Word of God in Florence during many years, and combining a singular reputation for sanctity with much sound doctrine, had acquired the character of a prophet, and obtained an immense influence in the estimation of a great number of people, because when there appeared no sign (of danger) in Italy, but all were rejoicing in a profound tranquillity, he had predicted several times in his sermons the arrival in Italy of foreign armies, formidable on account of their strength and numbers, which would cast down their walls, destroy their troops, burn their cities, declaring that these predictions, and many others which he introduced continually into his sermons, he did not make by means of human science, nor the interpretation of the Scriptures, but by a special Divine revelation."† The predictions referred to were accomplished sooner or later.

Nevertheless, Savonarola in our times passes for a fanatic, a fool, or an impostor. In his own, being "a True Monk," in the worst age of the Christian Church, persecution and calumny, and even death, might naturally have been expected for him.

History teaches mankind more truths than are to be found sanctioned in ephemeral literature, or political or polemical periodicals.

* Burlamacchi, p. 544. † Guicciardini, Hist. d'Italia.

It teaches them that all "arrant humbug" is not on the side of credulity.

It teaches them that an inveterate habit of disbelief, an obstinate, dogged, unimpressible scepticism, is as inimical to truth as unreasoning credulity itself, and somewhat more.

History teaches learning, modesty; and religion—teaches scholars and sages forbearance and humility. History teaches man that truth and justice have not shrines at which the worship of this world is extensively performed. Its lessons make us acquainted with the facts that few men of genuine philanthropy, and of original genius or piety, or a spirit that manifestly soared above selfish sordid interests, ever appeared on this mortal stage, in the character of reformers entrusted with any great mission of importance to the interests of humanity, however high or holy, who were not slandered, cried down, discredited, mocked, and ridiculed, and, if possible, got rid of, either by stabbing their reputation, or driving them into exile, or taking away their lives.

Even so it fared with Savonarola and his efforts to serve God and the people among whom his lot was cast: he was defamed, his mission was brought into contempt, he was persecuted and put to death. The Apostles of truth and justice, in all nations who war with wickedness, should never be unprepared for some such doom for all heroic efforts to serve mankind effectually, to exalt and to spiritualise them.

Discords having arisen between Alphonso of Arragon, King of Naples, and Lodovico Sforza (Il Moro), of Milan, the latter commenced his machinations at the court of Charles the Eighth, the young king of France, for the ruin of the house of Arragon. Lodovico's diplomacy was successfully directed towards inducing the French sovereign to assert a claim which he called "his rights" to the kingdom of Naples, in virtue of his hereditary title to all the territory that had been possessed by Renato D'Angio. In the meantime there were misunderstandings between Alexander the Sixth and Alphonso of Naples, and a rupture in the amicable relations that had previously subsisted between Pietro de Medici (the son of Lorenzo) and Lodovico

Sforza. In 1493, moreover, there were grave dissensions between Alexander the Sixth and the Cardinal Giuliano della Rovera, styled Cardinal di San Pietro in Vincoli, a most formidable adversary of Alexander—"Nimicissimo del Papa." This Cardinal was subsequently (in 1503) Pope Julius the Second. The Cardinal, in 1493, was in communication and correspondence with the court of France for the same designs which Savonarola had in view — the removal of Alexander the Sixth from the Papal throne, the calling of a council, and the reformation of church discipline and government. In the work of Reumont, "Chronologiche e Sincrone Della Storia Fiorentina," we read, in the records of the year 1493, of the "Maneggi alla Cortè del Re di Francia .... della Cardinali di San Pietro in Vincoli." And then the same annals inform us there are "suspicions and armaments on all sides."

Thus we find there were "Maneggi" at the court of France on the part of a Cardinal, afterwards a Pontiff, for the removal of Alexander, and the only means of accomplishing this desirable act appeared to the Cardinal to be the coming into Italy of the French sovereign with sufficient strength to effect that object.*

Savonarola was not then in communication with the French government, but he was so a little later, and with the same object at heart which the Cardinal had in view.

What did not pass for treason in the general, was rank perfidy and sedition in the private Christian soldier, in the sight of the infidel critic Bayle.

In 1494, Charles the Eighth set out on his expedition against Naples, without any adequate preparation or provision, plan or purpose, that was intelligible to his counsellors or to himself. Alphonso of Naples, at the same time, despatched his son, Ferdinand, with some troops, into Romagna, against the forces of Lodovico Sforza, and sent his son, Frederic, with a fleet to Genoa. All his efforts of resistance failed; the cup of his iniquity was full, the divine retribution was about to fall on the

* Reumont, Storia Fiorentina, 4to. *Fir.* 1841, an. 1493.

Neapolitan branch of the house of Arragon, and never did it visit greater turpitude.

People of the nineteenth century, in the pride of intellectual and social progress and civilization, do not believe much in the theory of retribution falling on nations and dynasties, who have signally outraged justice, humanity, and religion. But it falls for all that; and it fell with a vengeance on the unfortunate Alphonso, King of Naples, and his children. The French king Charles, as if he was performing a part in a melodramatic entertainment, marched through Italy with great pomp and pageantry, carousing, borrowing, offering battle and giving balls, levying contributions and visiting churches, till he came to Asta Pavia, and entered Romagna without any resistance. The poor French sovereign himself was quite unable to comprehend the successes, not of his arms, but the mere sight of an army without a commissariat, a military chest, or officers fit to set a squadron in the field.

Up to this period of his exploits—namely, the appearance of his army and the ravages of it, from which the unfortunate Italian peasantry suffered wherever he came—Florence and its ruler made a show of hostility to the designs of the French sovereign. But no sooner did the invaders enter Tuscany, than Pietro de Medici, in October, 1494, consulting only his fears, forgetting his duty to the Republic, and to its magistrates and councillors, without apprizing any officer of the government or the State, proceeded to the camp of Charles at Sazzano, and entered into an ill-advised treaty of amity with the French sovereign, binding himself and the republic to yield up to the French, *during the war*, five of the principal fortresses of the state.

Some days prior to the 9th of October (1494), Savonarola was sent on an embassy, with some other citizens, to the king of France, then at Lunigiana, accompanied by Fra Francisco Salviati, Fra Thomaso Businum, and Fra Domenico de Pescia. The reader will bear in mind, that on every occasion of great importance, Fra Domenico is either the agent or the

companion of Savonarola. Fra Girolamo had set out on foot on his embassy, but the Signoria had a mule prepared for him and sent after him, which, "for the honour of the republic, he consented to ride the remainder of the journey."

The influence acquired by Fra Girolamo over the citizens of Florence, and the apprehension entertained by them of the intentions of the French sovereign, are very manifestly shewn in embassy.

embassy of the friar had to follow the King Charles to , and finally to Pisa, where an audience with the king granted.

ra Girolamo made a discourse remarkable for its eloquence, dignity, and anxiety for the interests of the republic, to the French sovereign.

The main design of the orator was, to impress the mind of Charles with the idea that a great mission had been given to him; that he, King Charles, had been chosen by God to be the minister of the divine justice, for the restoration of religion, and the repression of impiety and tyranny.

Future blessings were predicted for him if he accomplished that mission, and prevented the people of Italy, *and especially of Florence*, from being oppressed or injured by his troops; and menaces of the divine retribution falling on him, and on his house, were not wanting, in the event of his disregarding those counsels which were given to him by God's command.

"After this discourse," says Burlamacchi, "one of the first barons of the king took the father by the hand, and conducted him into the royal chamber, where he had a conversation with the king that lasted for an hour. This was on a Sunday, on the 9th of November.

"It was on the following day *that the king set the Pisans at liberty*; and *on the same day*," adds Burlamacchi, "Pietro de Medici returned to Florence, after the secret convention into which he had entered with the king, thinking on his arrival in Florence to take possession of the palace of the Signoria, and to establish himself as an absolute sovereign under the protection of a foreign prince."

But the scheme failed, and the power of the Medici was broken down.

The first mention by Nardi, in his History of Florence, of Fra Girolamo, in relation to the unauthorized surrender of the five fortresses of the republic to the French sovereign, and to the embassy in which Fra Girolamo was sent to the king, is to the following effect:—

"Those things (done by Pietro), on being heard in Florence by the Signoria and the people, how he alone, without any authority from the Signoria, and without the knowledge of his associate envoys of the republic, had the courage to deprive his own country of so many important possessions, caused a great ferment in the city, every one being extremely indignant at such conduct. They immediately appointed five other *oratori*, among whom was Fra Girolamo." . . . . Nardi says, the first interview of this new embassy with the king was at Lucca, and that the mind of his majesty was found to be very much preoccupied and prejudiced against the objects of this mission by Pietro. But they were desired to proceed to Pisa, to which place the king was then going, as one more convenient for considering the matters they were charged with treating of, by the republic. "If it were not," says Nardi, "that Fra Girolamo spoke very efficaciously in defence of the Florentine people, and made use of many words deprecatory (of injustice) and menacing of the divine retribution, this embassy would be of small importance."*

Thus, while Pietro was intriguing against the republic, an active agent of it was neutralizing his efforts.

This matter is involved in much obscurity. We can only get at the real facts relating to it, by reading the various accounts given by different historians of the mission of Pietro de Medici to King Charles, and by comparing the date of that mission, and the date also of an embassy sent to the same sovereign, immediately after Pietro's departure from Florence, which appears to have been determined on by certain members of the

* Nardi, Hist. della Citta di Fiorenza, lib. 1, p. 18. 4to. Fir. [illegible]

Signoria, who were inimical to the Medici, for the express purpose of preventing any measures hostile to the republic, which were evidently suspected to be meditated by Pietro.

Audin de Rians, in his "Sommario della Vita de Savonarola," recording of the affairs of 1494, says:—"Savonarola succeeded fully in his embassy to the king at Pisa, in appeasing his anger against the Florentines, when he was bent on manifesting his indignation against the republic; and more than once he succeeded with his mild, persuasive, and energetic words, and better than the celebrated Pietro Capponi, to prevent the carnage with which the city of Florence was menaced: and moreover, those persuasive words of his, profoundly felt by the monarch, procured for the republic in its adversity better terms than would have been otherwise obtained."*

"The embassy having been," to use Nardi's words, "honourably, courteously, and magnificently received," soon after returned to Florence. Pietro, who had remained also in Pisa during the sojourn of the envoys there, after taking certain measures of a military kind in conjunction with the Orsini, for effecting his plans in Florence, took his departure about the same time.

"He departed," says Nardi, "with a firm resolution to make himself an absolute prince of his country, instigated chiefly so to do by his wife and her relatives, the Orsini, *and also to put to death, or send into exile, all those whom he knew to have machinated against him.*"

The rest of his account, respecting his return to Florence, and his flight from it, is in conformity with that given by the other historians, except that it ascribes the ultimate panic of Pietro, which seems to have suddenly prostrated all his energies, to the tolling of the great bell of Florence, "campana grossa à martella," which he had taken some measures, sufficient ones as he erroneously imagined, to prevent the Signoria or the citizens obtaining access to.† The moment he heard the ominous sound of that great bell, which had been the signal in

* Sommario della Vita, &c. p. 22. † Nardi, p. 22

former times, on so many occasions, for outbreaks of sedition and disaffection, and tumults against his family, it seemed to him as if the knell of his fortunes and those of his house was tolled, and that his destiny and theirs, as rulers of Florence, was accomplished.

On the same day that the French invader made his triumphal entry into Florence, the 17th November, 1494, the Count Pico della Mirandola, the luminary and wonder of his age, the great friend of Savonarola and of Lorenzo de Medici, took his departure out of this world.

He died in Florence, and was buried in the church of the Convent of San Marco.

The 8th of November, 1494, Pietro de Medici had returned, according to Reumont, to Florence, but the news of his infamous treaty had arrived before him. General discontent prevailed in Florence. It walked before him as he proceeded to the palace of the Medici, and it met him at its gates. Luca Corsini, one of the Signoria, as Pietro approached the palace, shut the doors in his face. Sedition, which sprung up as if by magic, apparently unpreconcerted, spread all at once over the city. Pietro, accompanied by his brother Julian (the subsequent Pontiff, Leo the Tenth) and a younger brother, fled to Bologna. The palace of the Medici was sacked. The power of the Medici—the growth of ages, the work of minds of the first order of intellect—in one instant, without the slightest effort at resistance, was laid in the dust. At the first intimation of the disaster, the Cardinal de Medici had taken refuge in the convent of San Marco. There it was thought advisable to procure for him the disguise of a Franciscan monk, and in this habit he effected his escape to Bologna. The citizens of Florence recalled the banished Pazzi and Neroni, and released those of both families who were still in confinement, and, with their aid, restored their ancient Republican form of government. All these occurrences took place between the 9th and 17th of November, 1494.

The king, on his arrival, having summoned the newly-ap-

pointed government to confer with him, he put forward the treaty entered into with him by Pietro de Medici, and gave unmistakeable intimations of his intention of enforcing its stipulations. Pietro de Caponi, one of the principal magistrates, had the courage to address those memorable words to the foreign invader—"You will sound your trumpets, and we—will ring our bells!"

A dozen of bold words, articulately spoken, seemed to have saved Florence from being pillaged and enslaved. A compact was entered into, whereby the Florentine fortresses were allowed to remain in the hands of the French during the war; and, after some tumults occasioned by the brutality of the French troops, the king, on the 28th of November, took his departure for Naples, and left the newly-restored Republic of Florence in the full possession of its independence. But, during his stay there, some very remarkable occurrences took place.

On the arrival of the king in Florence, his first visit was to the Duomo, where he paid his devotions. During the nine days of his sojourn in Florence, notwithstanding the terror that reigned, and the tumults that had broke out, one of which was attended with disastrous consequences, Fra Girolamo preached daily to a vast auditory, calling the people to penance, prayer, and fasting. A general fast was proclaimed by him, and particular prayers were prescribed by him, in this important crisis, to be repeated in every house, several times a-day, and in the convent of San Marco. The whole community was almost constantly engaged in prayer and psalmody, hoping by such efficacious means to appease the wrath of heaven, and to procure its protection for the city from the imminent dangers with which it was beset.

Never in this world did patriot exhibit love of country, of his birth or of his adoption, greater than was manifested by the Dominican monk of San Marco, for the safety and the honour of the Republic of Florence and its people. And this exalted patriotism was exhibited by a man of the cloister and the cowl—a monk, a priest, and a man believing in his religion.

During the stay of the French king and his army in Florence, we never hear of any intercourse between him and Fra Girolamo, except when Florence and her citizens were to be saved from some impending or apprehended peril, by the interference of the latter in their behalf with the invader.

Nardi, referring to the serious tumult which broke out between the French soldiers and the citizens, out of a circumstance of small importance in itself, but, nevertheless, which endangered the whole city and the republic, namely, the rescue of a Florentine prisoner from the hands of some French soldiers, —commends the conduct of Fra Girolamo on that occasion.

In all the tumults consequent to the return of Pietro, and terminating in his flight, we hear nothing of Savonarola, either as an actor or an adversary. "But in the scandalous and perilous tumults which took place in Florence during the sojourn of the king in Florence," says Nardi, "the above-mentioned Fra Girolamo exerted himself, and toiled exceedingly. Hence, in those times, as it appeared to the Signoria, that the king procrastinated all affairs, not appearing to have any intention of departing from the city so speedily as they desired, the above-mentioned friar was obliged to visit his majesty, saying to him, that the people were very much afflicted, and could no longer bear such a state of anxiety, nor remain any longer exposed to so much danger. And that, moreover, in trivial occupations, he wasted time unprofitably, and that he should look well to his council, whose determination might be useful to them, but not advantageous to his interests; and, that God having called him to the work of the restoration of the Italian Church, as he had already announced, and, for four years previous to his arrival, had predicted of him, and publicly preached, if his majesty proceeded in this manner, by acts of injustice on his part, or on the part of his ministers, perhaps he would not be deemed worthy of conducting this great mission to an end; but God would never want for other hands and instruments to perfect this great work. Such were the considerations which this man laid before the king, in conformity with those which we know at that time

were the views and councils of the king's captain-general of the army of Romagna, Monsieur Obigni."*

But it is from Burlamacchi we must learn the full account of the efforts of Savonarola at this period, for the salvation of Florence.

"The members of the Signoria, he tells us a second time, in the midst of dismay and bewilderment, had to seek Savonarola's aid and council.

The same Pietro de Capponi, who talked to the king of causing the bells of all the churches in Florence to be set a-ringing should he give an order for sounding his bugles and his trumpets, got private information from one of the king's courtiers, to whom he had been known in France, that the king being resolved there should be no alarm excited by the sound of the trumpet, and time allowed for rousing the citizens to arms by the bells of the city, had determined on sacking the city by night, and had appointed the very night on which the timely information was given, for letting loose his troops on the city.† It was then within two hours of the appointed time, when Capponi, in vain, endeavoured to get the members of the government to take some prompt measures against the danger. They were bewildered with terror and consternation, and more like drunken men, deprived of judgment, than councillors, fit to advise in so terrible an emergency. The councillors, on whose wisdom, fortitude, and presence of mind, the destinies of a whole city—the lives and fortunes of its citizens, the safety of their children, and, more than all, the honour of their wives and daughters depended—sat weeping and wringing their hands, and lamenting their hard fate, utterly incapable of all exertion. Then was a prediction of Savonarola verified to the letter—"When you shall find yourselves in those straights and tribulations, you will become like drunken men, and lose all use of reason." In the midst of the lamentations and tears, some person cried out in a loud voice, repeating his exclamations—"Go to the servant of God, Fra Girolamo! Go to the servant of God, Fra Girolamo!"

* Nardi. † Burlamacchi, p. 545.

The name of the Prior of San Marco was no sooner heard, than a sudden change came over the spirit of their consultation, —vivid hopes, with the quickness of lightning, flashed on their minds. Instantly a deputation to the father was determined on, the members of it arriving almost breathless at San Marco. They gain admittance, and find the prior and all his brethren assembled in the choir in prayer—in prayer for the protection of the city, at that very moment on the brink of ruin, with the final order for giving it to fire and sword about to be issued, while its inhabitants are utterly unconscious of all danger.

There was one person, however, it is to be believed, not altogether unconscious of that danger, not apprized of it like Capponi by mortal man,—and that person was praying to God to avert it, at the time of the arrival of that deputation. Savonarola was not unconscious of the danger, but his mind was not bewildered like the minds of the State Councillors. He was taking prompt and efficacious measures with his community for frustrating the designs of the enemy. With the sword of the spirit, he and his friars, weak with fasting and watching, as they were, were still fighting for Florence, battling in prayer with the wickedness of men, and wearying heaven with supplications to turn away its wrath from the devoted city.

Oh, if we could know what was passing in the mind of that mysterious friar, the night of the intended spoliation of his beloved Florence, when he deemed it necessary to have his brethren in the church, spending the little time allotted to them for repose in prayer, what solemn interest should we not find even in so much knowledge!

If we could fathom his deep thoughts for some preceding days, when he was prescribing prayer and fasting, and calling the people to do penance—"agite penitentiam, agite penitentiam"—in such earnest terms of entreaty, as a man might use who was aware some terrible calamity was impending over them, of which they knew not, what a subject for grave reflection should we have. If we could realise his feelings when the young

and the thoughtless listened to his earnest admonition with a smile at his solicitude, or perhaps a sneer at his supposed fanaticism; if we could fancy ourselves in a corner of the church, with the lights only burning in the cloister, that night of mortal anxiety, for the safety of the city in the minds of the Signoria, and, doubtlessly, in the mind of Savonarola also, and might watch his features, when the rapping at the convent gate for admission at that advanced hour of the evening was heard, and when Capponi and his companions announced the catastrophe that was on the very verge of taking place, what a sight it would have been to have observed the workings of the strong feelings of the heart, the emotions of the holy spirit, and the fixed purpose of the heroic mind in the varying expression of the countenance of Savonarola on that occasion.

When Savonarola, says Burlamacchi, was informed of the cause of the visit to him, he said to the brethren, "My children, after refreshment, come back to the choir, and persist in prayer till I return."

"Having taken for his companion Fra T. Busini, he proceeded immediately to the palace of the Medici, where the king lodged, and having arrived at the entrance of the palace, he encountered the first sentinel, who said to him, 'Where are you going? go back, you cannot enter here, nor have an audience.'"

"The Barons who were about the king, had directed that no one should enter, in order that their designs might not be interrupted. The father, then seeing that it was impossible to gain admission, and that the time was spent in vain, quickly returned to the convent, and gave himself up, with great fervour and concentration of spirit, to prayer. After some time, he felt himself inwardly illuminated, and with the ears of the heart, he heard a voice, saying: 'Return! return! you shall enter.' Turning to his companion (the friar), he said, 'Let us go back to the palace, for there I have to confer with the king.' The citizens who were present, wondered very much at this. They returned with him to the palace where the king was. The father ad-

vanced to the entrance alone, he was at once admitted, and quickly passing the second and third sentinel, he was conducted before the king, who was in his chamber all armed, ready to put in execution his most nefarious design. When he observed the servant of God, he looked at him for a little, and, according to the custom of the kings of France, he rose up to salute him. The servant of God took a small crucifix, which he always carried about with him, and advancing, he held it up to the lips of the king, saying, 'This represents the Christ who made heaven and earth; respect not me, but respect Him. He is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, who causes the earth to tremble, and gives victory to princes, according to his pleasure and his justice. He punishes and brings ruin on impious and unjust kings, and will destroy you and all your army, if you do not desist from such cruelty as you meditate, and abandon the design you have formed against this city. Otherwise, there being in this city so many friends and servants of God, and so many innocent souls night and day engaged in praising His majesty, their cries will ascend to the throne of God, and confusion and destruction will fall on all your army. Do you not know that it is of small moment with God whether he is victorious over a few or over many? Do you not remember what he did with Sennacherib, that most proud king of Assyria? Remember, that while Moses continued praying to the Lord, Joshua and the people triumphed over their enemies. So will it be with you, who, by your pride, are brought to covet that which is not yours. Let it suffice you to have the hearts of the Florentines. Leave, then, your most cruel and impious purpose, meditated against an innocent and most faithful people.'

"Thus spoke the father to the king, putting much fear into his heart, menacing him with retribution on the part of God, and still holding the crucifix in his hand. And with such ardour and efficacy did he speak, that those present were filled with dread. The king, with his ministers, began to weep.

"Then the father took the king by the hand, and said to him: 'Know, sacred majesty, that the will of God is, that you depart

from this city, without making any change in its affairs, otherwise you, with your army, will lose your lives here.' "*

"The spirit of God," observes Burlamacchi, "manifested itself in a striking manner in the aspect and manner of Fra Girolamo: when he was mirthful and lively, it appeared as if everything in nature smiled around him, and Paradise unfolded all its beauties and its blessings."

But, on the other hand, "*when he was disturbed in mind, his mien was that of a man who could make all the world tremble.*"

Florence was saved by Fra Girolamo from the dreadful fate of Brescia, and some other places, which fell into the hands of this insensate marauder, whom Savonarola, in his zeal for Florence, called a sacred king.†

There were provocations, or at least pleas, for the menaced plunder and spoliation of Florence on the part of Charles the Sixth, which the biographers of Savonarola have either not noticed, or only slightly referred to.

The king, on his arrival, had demanded of the Florentines a sum of 120,000 crowns of gold, to enable him to continue his march on Naples. He had given twenty-four hours only to realise this sum. It was in the extremity of the distress occasioned by this demand and menace, says Audin, that the magistrates came to seek the succour of Savonarola.‡

Fra Girolamo, in one of his sermons, preached on the 28th of October, 1497, gives all the particulars of this occurrence which are here related, and ends his account of it in these words: "O, Florence! all that was done that day was effected by God, and mediation that came by prayer."

After the preceding interview of Savonarola with the king, negociations were immediately entered into, for the purpose of making an amicable treaty between the French sovereign and the Republic. An honourable capitulation was completed, and Florence remained a free and independent republic.

* Burlamacchi, p. 546.

† It is strange that Philip de Comines makes no reference to this happy interference of Savonarola with the king Charles, nor Reudon.

‡ Audin, Hist. de Leo X.

Burlamacchi states, that one of the chief nobles of King Charles acknowledged that the salvation of Florence, on this occasion, was the work of Savonarola.

And, moreover, he adds, the whole account of that interference is narrated by Pietro degli Alberti, who, at that time, was not the enemy of Savonarola, and almost every one believed that account to be true.

In ratifying the treaty entered into with the republic, the Signoria and the king gave a solemn sanction to it by attending high mass, *and receiving the sacrament at the Duomo, and swearing to observe it faithfully.* "*The king swore on the sacred host, in the presence of all the people, that he would faithfully observe the compact.*"*

It certainly was no sense of justice or humanity, or tendency to moderation, that induced Charles to leave Florence, not only unpillaged, but in the full enjoyment of her liberty.

The king took his departure at last, as we are told by Nardi, on the 28th of November, 1494, leaving lasting remembrances of the brutality, insolence, and insubordination of his troops, who made hardly any distinction between friends and enemies, in their conduct towards them. The prudence of the government alone, and the efforts of Fra Girolamo to second them efficiently—*sub Dio*—saved Florence from utter ruin.

* Burlamacchi, p. 546.

CHAPTER XII.

FLORENCE RESTORED TO ITS LIBERTY.—THE REPUBLICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT RE-MODELLED.—SAVONAROLA'S AID AND COUNCIL SOUGHT FOR BY THE SIGNORIA.—HIS INTERPOSITION IN SECULAR AFFAIRS.—HIS DISCOURSE ON GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE SIGNORIA.—HIS TREATISE ON GOVERNMENT.—THE QUESTION OF THE LICITNESS OF ECCLESIASTICAL INTERFERENCE IN SECULAR AFFAIRS.—SAVONAROLA'S MOTIVES FOR IT, AND ITS RESULTS.—1494, 1495.

"Before the days of change, still is it so:
By a divine instinct, men's minds mistrust
Ensuing danger; as by proof, we see
The waters swell before a boist'rous storm."

SHAKS. *Rich. III.* act I.

In the beginning of 1495, Savonarola's interposition in the affairs of government commenced.

The ruling passion of Savonarola's mind was a desire to make Florence a spiritual state, a theocracy, a republic governed by the people, under the dominion of the divine law. He deemed it essential for its duration, and to secure for it the divine protection, that it should commence existence by an act of mercy; and therefore, he caused to be proclaimed a general amnesty, extending to all the adherents of the Medici. In one of his sermons he expressly tells his hearers on what grounds he had advocated a change of government—it was to lead Florence to adopt a new regimé, "that she should begin to become a spiritual state," and to make the law of God the basis of all her legislation.

It was on a singular theory that he recommended from the

pulpit and in his writings this mode of ruling a people: "I have always shown to thee," he said, "on clear grounds, that a kingdom is so much the stronger, the more spiritual it is; and so much the more spiritual, the nearer it relates itself with God. But with God no one can have communion, who makes not peace with his neighbour!"

If we could form an opinion on this subject, regarding only the motives of Savonarola, without any reference to the feasibility of the project, we should find little difficulty in coming to a conclusion on it.

But the question is, was the project practicable? was it calculated to promote peace and unanimity? was the theocratic form of government he advocated, likely, if established, to endure?

There was a partial success in the attempt, it is true, a renovation in one class of religious influences, and a reformation in manners, which endured for a few years. But these benefits were not lasting, and while they did exist, they were certainly accompanied with great contestations, strife, and tumult. But perhaps it may be said, and truly said, this is one of the conditions of life, one of the contingencies inseparable from it—that no good can ever exist in the world, or be attempted to be done in it, that will not be alloyed with evil, or adulterations, or adverse influences of some kind or other.

The world has had one theocracy, and in all probability it will never have another, *till the end begins to come.* The world has called for kings, and God has given them Sauls in abundance, in His anger. And when nations sicken of these Sauls, and the voice of the people has been proclaimed, the voice of God, and this mundane deity of concrete dirt, ignorance, and pride, cries out—"Give us a constitution! a republic with two chambers! or a nominal monarchy with republican institutions, with a parliament and a press for its palladium, and trial by jury for a glorious privilege;" they obtain what they shouted for, or shed their blood to get possession of; and, perhaps, their material and moral interests are by no means benefitted by the triumph of the desires of their heart, but their institutions

are bound to their back, and, like Sinbad the sailor, they cannot get rid of their oppressive burden.

The gravest charge laid to the account of Savonarola in history, both cotemporaneous and modern, is that of his interference in temporal affairs.

I will endeavour to do as I have done in other matters of controversy, respecting accusations brought against Savonarola—I will afford my readers all the authentic information that can be obtained, and may be required to enable them to form a correct opinion on the subject of this inquiry.

But, independently of such information, they will require a knowledge of matters which it is not in my power to impart, or my province to provide for them.

They will have to satisfy themselves on these points:

1. Are spiritual men—specially devoted to the service of God and the ministrations of religion, at all times, under all circumstances, and in all relations of government to the interests of the people, both temporal and eternal, authorised or forbidden by God's law, and the ordinances of the Church which emanate from it—to take a part in the enactment or administration, emendation or abolition, of the laws of a State?

2. Does it trench or not, on the limits of their ecclesiastical jurisdiction, to counsel princes or their ministers of State, in matters that are of a mixed kind, affecting not only immediately the liberties of a people, but remotely the lives of the poor?

3. At what point is the line to be drawn between the interests of religion and those of humanity; and when fixed, where the well-defined duties of the ministry of religion shall cease to be imperative, and those which the interests of humanity impose, commence to be obligatory?

4. Is the interference of ecclesiastics in political affairs, for mere party purposes—for the sake of notoriety, for the sake of popularity, for the sake of gain—compatible or otherwise with their spiritual avocations, with the canons of the Church, with the interests of religion, with the influence of a Christian ministry?

5. Does not the question of the legitimacy of ecclesiastical interference in political affairs depend on the nature of the motives for interposition in them, discriminating between selfish, interested, and ambitious or vindictive feelings, animating such motives and impulses, arising from a desire to defend or to advance the several or separate interests of humanity, morality, truth and justice, which are all comprised in those of religion?

6. How are we to arrive at a knowledge of the motives for the interference of ecclesiastics in political affairs?

7. Is it by the beneficial or disadvantageous results of such interference, in their bearings on the moral or material interests of the people; and also by the fact of such interference being calculated to produce results, or to impede events, that are in harmony with religious instincts, or the interests of humanity, such motives are to be ascertained?

8. Can the material interests of humanity be licitly promoted by ecclesiastical interference in political concerns, if the honour or the service of God be neglected or prejudiced by the promotion of those material interests?

9. Lastly, if emergencies should arise when it is licit for the good of religion, or the benefit of humanity, for ecclesiastics to take a part in affairs of State of a legislating, elective, and ministrative kind, should not such interference be an exceptional line of action, seldom adopted and reluctantly had recourse to, rather than a regular course of proceeding, that habit makes a pursuit, and undue devotion to it a passion, a pastime, or a trade?

These are questions that must be answered, before we are in a condition to form and pronounce an opinion on the conduct of Savonarola.

So long as Savonarola confined his interposition in State affairs to efforts of a mediative kind, using the influence of his ministry with the French sovereign, for the safety of the republic, and the salvation of its citizens from rapine and spoliation, I suppose it will be agreed by all, that he exercised his spiritual influence for a salutary, nay more, for a holy purpose,

inasmuch as God's honour is promoted in serving our fellow-men, who are the members of his Christ.

But when the interference of Fra Girolamo in temporal affairs extended to a decision on modes of government, and the act of devising a civil constitution for a State, we no longer must expect the same unanimity of opinion, in regard either to the prudence or the piety of the ecclesiastic who undertook the office of a Solon or a Lycurgus.

But he who finds himself in a position to answer satisfactorily the preceding queries, will in all probability come to no conclusion unfavourable to the religious principles of Savonarola, in so far, at least, as his motives were concerned in this interposition in civil matters; and even though they may condemn his prudence, and find fault with his expectations, they will be obliged to acquit his piety, and acknowledge the purity of his intentions.

Savonarola found himself compelled, on divers occasions, to leave the seclusion of his convent for the council chamber of the Signoria, at their importunate request and solicitation. He had to answer communications received from the French sovereign and his ministers, during his stay in Italy.

Burlamacchi states, "that after the King Charles had conquered Naples, having learned that the Venetians and Milanese Governments were of accord to intercept him on his return from Naples to his own dominions, he despatched an agent to Fra Girolamo, named Jacopo, to ascertain whether there was any danger to be apprehended for him on his return.

"The Father replied, that God had conferred many benefits on him, and had conceded to him the acquisition of a mighty kingdom without any difficulty. And though his Majesty, since all these favours had been granted to him, had committed many crimes, nevertheless it was God's pleasure that his enemies should not prevail against him, and that he should return triumphantly into his own kingdom, and that, without unsheathing a sword, he would lose the kingdom of Naples as he had acquired it; as afterwards it came to pass.

"In the letter, however, which he wrote to the King at a later period, he said, that God willed by his instrumentality to destroy all the tyrants of Italy; and that, after accomplishing this mission, it was the will of God that he should go against the Turks. And he was reminded that, if he had kept his word with the Florentines, the kingdom of Naples would not have revolted against him, and he would have had great success against the infidels. And he signified to his Majesty that he never wrote to him except those things which were revealed to him from on high."*

On the King's return from Naples, on his arrival in Poggibonzi, Fra Girolamo once more was sent as ambassador of the Republic to his Majesty, to compliment him on his successes, and to obtain, if possible, the restitution of the five Florentine fortresses which had been temporarily conceded to him.

Fra Girolamo set out on his embassy, accompanied by Bartolomeo Ridolfi and three Friars of his Order. He had four audiences of the King. On the first occasion the King was at table when the Father was admitted. His Majesty no sooner heard that Fra Girolamo had arrived, than he rose from table, and walked out to the head of the stairs to meet him. The audience then given lasted nearly an hour. The second time he conferred with the King was in the principal church of the place, and then *he promised to restore Pisa to the Florentine Republic.* The King pressed the Father to follow him to Pisa, which the latter declined, alleging the necessity of returning to his flock. The third time when he conferred with the King he consented to join his Majesty at Castel Fiorentino. And there he had another formal audience, his Majesty not having passed by Florence, as the Father had declared expressly he should not pass that way. "He predicted," adds Burlamacchi, "to the King that, if he did not restore Pisa to the Florentines, and did not treat the latter well, that his only son would die, and that God would take from him that which he had dearest to him in the world."

* Burlamacchi, p. 548.

Florence in the meantime remained under the government of the Signoria, and of that body the executive consisted of twenty persons, supposed to be of superior discretion. The acts of the adherents of the Medici, and the movements of Pietr and his companions in exile—"Fuor-usciti"—gave much uneasiness to the government. All those who had taken any part against Pietro felt there was no security, unless a more stable form of government was established. On this point it would appear that Savonarola was consulted by the authorities soon after the departure of the French, though the fact is not expressly mentioned by his biographers.

Nardi states, however, that, in order to calm the public mind, Fra Girolamo was requested to preach before the Signoria and other magistrates, and to the people. He accordingly preached one morning to a congregation, from which women and children were excluded.

He proposed to his audience, says Nardi, four subjects for consideration, conducive to peace and security from all danger. First, the fear of God, to induce people to reform their manners and customs, to do all things in a Christian manner for Christian ends, in order to obtain the Divine grace.

The second, the love of the Republic; sacrificing to it every private consideration.

The third, a universal peace, with oblivion of injuries. By which amnesty it was understood that every error and offence committed by the friends of the former government (under the Medici, up to the date of the removal of the past rulers) should be pardoned, excepting, from the concessions granted, the restoration of privileges, and of public monies to be repaid by those who had been previously declared indebted to the State; the recovery of which, he said, was to be effected with all reasonable promptness and discretion, forgiving, however, such debtors all penalties and pains which in strict justice they might have incurred.

The fourth thing they should consider doing was, to constitute a form of government as universal (in its obligations and

privileges) as possible, which should comprehend all citizens, to whom, according to the orders of the inhabitants of the city, the government belonged, from all that consideration and respect from position due to their discretion, on account of which they should be chosen and deemed eligible for office.

But, that no person should be allowed to lord it over the civil government, to aspire to an equality of power with its fundamental rights and privileges, or a superiority over them as in past times it had been done by the seven citizens of the Republic, and, therefore, he said that the new government should comprehend all the citizens, excluding none who were legitimately eligible for the functions of government, as we have before observed. And, as if by way of example, he proposed to his audience a form of government, and a grand council, like that of the city of Venice, but adding to it and taking from it as the peculiarities of the character of the Florentines might make it expedient to do, or as it might be judged useful, and would be becoming of discreet reformers to determine. People thought that this man understood very little about worldly affairs, but discussed these matters generally, in relation only to their moral aspect, and, above all, in reference to the Divine principles of truth and Christian philosophy.*

In his sermon, says Burlamacchi, he said it was the will of God that the safety of the Republic and the citizens should be secured by a new mode of administering public affairs; and instead of a small number of administrators, amounting to twenty, there should be a great council representing all classes of citizens; and thus (by his recommendation) there was introduced into a popular government a popular element which was essential to a Republic.

The citizens of the aristocratic order manifested their dissatisfaction at this suggestion. On the other hand, the people, the

* The new Council General, after the expulsion of Pietro, was composed at first of 830 citizens, eventually the number was increased to 1725.—*Storia Florentina Da Reumon, A.D.* 1495. Nardi, Hist. Flor. lib. 1mo, p. 29.

industrial class, in general approved very strongly of it. A committee was formed, soon after Savonarola's views were put forward, to consider this subject, and very long and angry discussions followed between three parties, all of different views on the matter. "In another sermon, notwithstanding these dissensions, the Father said, let what will happen, whether they wish the project should be carried into effect or not, it will be accomplished, *and the white beans will become black.*" * The white beans represented affirmative votes, and the black those which were adverse. At length, in the month of December (1494), the great council was determined on, by means of the strong pressure of the popular will in favour of that measure.

In the discussion on the proposed form of government in the council, Antonio Soderini, a man of great weight in the Republic, spoke at considerable length in favour of the principle of popular influence and power in the administration of public affairs. Antonio Vespucci, a person of much eminence and ability, declaimed strenuously against democracy and the intervention of the people in the business of the State. He appealed to history for the fact of the failure of all hopes which were ever built on the wisdom, stability, and steadfastness of the people in matters appertaining to the State. It was a bad government where measures were decided by counting votes, rather than estimating the value of opinions. There was a tendency to go from one extreme to the other, from one tyranny to another; but the worst tyranny of all, was that of a democracy which was restrained by no authority, nor confined within any limits. The government of Venice was not built up in a day; it was a work of ages; there was a third element in it moreover—in the perpetuity of the office of the Doge;—not to take into account that the important matters of State were decided on by a small council, while the great council of the nation took cognizance of the general affairs of the country. In Florence, the materials for disorder were numerous—there was a sickly state of society —and it was a folly to suppose, in a condition bordering on dis-

* Burlamacchi, p. 546.

organization, there was an innate principle of arrangement in a popular constitution—by virtue of which the organic elements of society would coalesce, and become re-composed in a symmetrical manner.

Rather it was to be feared the elevation of the popular power would tend to make it dizzy, and le d to new disorders. Rome and Athens, when they were demo ratic republics, were ever plunged in wars. These states had fallen, and in democracy the seeds of their dissolution were sown. Italy, at the present time, was weak and distracted, and she needed to be governed by wisdom and experience, and not subjected to experiments and novelties in the practice of the new state physicians. Vespucci, it is admitted, was a man of greater worldly wisdom than Soderini, or even his great friend Savonarola; but their opinion prevailed, and Vespucci's was scouted by the party then dominant, namely, the democratic one.

Savonarola's Treatise on Government is a composition well worthy of attention; with this remarkable discourse the reader will be made acquainted in another part of the work.

The dominant idea which prevails throughout the whole performance, like the all-pervading aria of some overture, which makes itself distinguishable in all its variations, is the notion (little understood in the fifteenth century) that a popular government of the people, for all its interests, moral, intellectual, and material, was the test of all forms of government, and the most calculated to make the people good and happy.

But Savonarola, unquestionably, was largely indebted to the treatise of St. Thomas Aquinas—"De Regimine Principum"—for this theory of popular government. St. Thomas has pointed out the evils of tyrannical government perhaps more clearly and truly than any modern political writer. And equally clearly and truly he has shewn that whatever form of government tends most to the moral, intellectual, and material interests of the people, and includes the largest number of citizens in the pale of its protection, is the best.

The profound speculations of the doctor of the schools, as

embodied in his ideas, "De Regimine Principum," were never put in practice till the Prior of San Marco presented to the Signoria of Florence, for the basis of a constitution, his "Discorso circa il Reggimento i Governo degli Stati e Specialmente sopra il governo della Cetta di Firenza."

The mistake of Savonarola, if mistake it were, was in imagining that everything that was good in theory, must be equally excellent in practice. But Savonarola proposed his form of *Gobierno Popolare* not as perfect or faultless, but as being the least bad of existing civil constitutions, and most expedient for the Florentines, in the peculiar circumstances of their Republic.

It is said by those who deem Savonarola not only faultless but almost infallible, that he constantly announced from the pulpit the inconveniences and mischiefs of too much liberty, and that the *Gobierno Popolare* was far from perfect. It is very true that he spoke often, and in very strong terms, of those inconveniences and mischiefs; *but it was after the constitution he framed for the Republic had been adopted and put in force.* The evils of too large an amount of liberty were made apparent to the modern lawgiver, in a multitude of conflicting interests and influences in the new government, which would have rendered the State quite ungovernable, if it were not for the religious element that had been introduced into it, making the *Gobierno Popolare*, in fact, a species of republican theocracy, and the Supreme Lord of the Florentines, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

But let those who will see nothing but the wildest fanaticism in the idea of establishing a civil government on such a basis, turn to the work of a distinguished statesman of our own times, a student of Christ Church—"The State in its Relations with the Church," by W. E. Gladstone, Esq.

The whole theory of the author rests on the proposition that the propagation of religious truth is one of the principal ends of government as government; and that there is no protection for any true interests of a people, moral or material, except in the dominant influence of religious truth in civil government.

"We may," says Mr. Gladstone, "state the same proposition

in a more general form, in which it surely must command universal assent. Wherever there is power in the universe, that power is the property of God, the King of that universe—his property of right, however for a time withholden or abused. Now this property is, as it were, realized, is used according to the will of the owner, when it is used for the purposes he has ordained," &c.*

Savonarola, however, differed from Mr. Gladstone as to the means of giving a Christian character to a government, for the purpose of exerting a Christianizing influence on a people. The friar would purify the Church, for the sake of adding to its religious power; the statesman would aggrandize and endow the Church with great power and political influence, with the view of extending its control, and fortifying its position in the State.

In a sermon of Savonarola's, expounding the book of Exodus, in the early part of 1498, not long before his death, he said, towards the end of his discourse: "This government, which has been established, or rather given to you by God, as the best (in the circumstances of the times), and for your greater good, has passed the limits which prevent it becoming more perfect. In this government now there are only mists, and not perfection."

This language is somewhat mystified, but the meaning is obvious enough. Savonarola had lived long enough to see his "Gobierno Popolare" had not realized his hopes, and its power was not even sufficient for the protection of his own life.

* But Mr. Gladstone's idea of a beneficent dominant influence of religious truth in civil government, is not the idea of a justifiable ascendancy of one creed over another in matters of civil rights or privileges.

"We, as fallible creatures," says Mr. Gladstone, "have no right, from any bare speculations of our own, to administer pains and penalties to our fellow-creatures, whether on social or religious grounds. We have the right to enforce the laws of the land by such pains and penalties, because it is expressly given by Him who has declared that the civil rulers are to bear the sword for the punishment of evil doers, and for the encouragement of them that do well. And so, in things spiritual, had it pleased God to give to the Church or the State this power, to be permanently exercised over their members, or mankind at large, we should have the right to use it; but it does not appear to have been so received, and, consequently, it should not be exercised."

The excellence of that theory of government, which he composed by the desire of the Signoria of Florence, in 1494, cannot be called in question. Any body who takes the trouble of looking into it, will perceive that it combines all that was good in the speculations on this subject of ancient philosophy, with a great deal that is to be found in modern views of government.

The Treatise on Government, by St. Thomas of Aquinas, the celebrated Doctor of Divinity of the Dominican order, who flourished some six centuries and a half ago, requires to be read by those who desire to form a correct judgment of the similar Treatise on Government by Savonarola, written in 1494. Both compositions are exceedingly curious.

The following extracts from the treatise of St. Thomas, faithfully translated, were published by me, in a work of mine, in 1847. The author of that treatise, it must be borne in mind, was a man of gigantic intellectual powers, of vast erudition, embued with all the doctrinal learning of his Church, and likewise with all the philosophy of former ages, as well as that of his own time. He wrote a treatise on government, which the admirers of Locke and Bolingbroke may not be ashamed to see cited in the same pages in which their names are found, and an illustration of the same subject which has been treated by them.

The treatise I refer to is that of St. Thomas of Aquinas, and is called "Opusculum de Regimine Principum," ad Regem Cypri.* The object, he declares in his preface, is to describe the duties of the kingly office, guided by the authority of the Sacred Writings, the doctrines of philosophers, and examples of past rulers. When it is borne in mind that the unpalatable truths, scattered so abundantly through this treatise, were written for the perusal of a king, and for his guidance, we ought not only to admire the noble daring of the writer, but the public virtue of the earliest defender of the full rights of the people. The following passages are literally translated, and afford a fair specimen of the political opinions of a saint, whose knowledge of the subject of which he treats might serve to make the reputation of half-a-dozen sages of modern times:—

* Edit. Fol. *Antwerpiæ*, 1612.

"The intention of every ruler," says St. Thomas, "ought to be to secure the prosperity of the body which he undertakes to govern. But the welfare and prosperity of the community consists in the preservation of that unity which is called peace. Every disturbance of it endangers the utility of the social life; nay, more, a distracted community renders society burdensome to itself. It should then be the chief object of the rulers of the multitude to procure that unity which constitutes peace. When a government, therefore, is most efficacious in promoting that object, it is most useful. Hence we call that most useful which conduces most to this end. It is manifest, that the union which is most effective, is that which is (so maintained) by one rather than many. . . . Wherefore the government of one is more useful than that of many." . . . [This proposition he proves at some length from religion, reason, and analogy with natural phenomena: "In toto universo unus Deus factor omnium et rector . . . in membrorum multitudini unum est quod omnia movet, scilicet cor, &c. . . . omne enim naturale regimen ab uno est."]*

"But as the government of a king is the best, so the government of a tyrant is the worst. . . For power in unity is more efficacious than power divided or dispersed. As, therefore, power *operating good* is useful, and more unity renders it still more *potent for good,* so the mischief is greater if the power which effects evil is unbroken and undivided. . . . Wherefore, in a *just government* the more unity (of action) the more useful is the rule, as the rule of a king is better than that of an aristocracy, and that of an aristocracy rather than that of the many. So, on the other hand, *in an unjust government,* the more the governing power is removed from unity, the more mischievous. Wherefore, the tyranny (of one) is more pernicious than an oligarchy, but an oligarchy is more pernicious than a democracy."

And further, "the government becomes unjust which despises the common good, and seeks the private advantage of the ruler. The more, therefore, it recedes from the public weal, the more

* De Regimine Principum S. Thomæ Aquinatis, cap. i. p. 160.

unjust is that government. It recedes more from the public weal in an oligarchy in which the welfare of a few is sought, than in a democracy, where the good of the many is the object. But further still does it recede from the common good in a tyrannous government, in which the good of one alone is sought. *Therefore a tyrant's rule is the more unjust.* But, like the manifest order of Divine Providence which prevails in the government of the universe, all good in human affairs arises only from one perfect cause; but what is evil in them is separately produced by each particular defect. For there is no beauty in a body, unless there is a corresponding disposal of all the members; but deformity is the result, when any part is not in keeping with another; and thus deformity from many causes and in different ways arises, but comeliness in one way only, and from one perfect cause. And thus it is in all things, good and evil. Providence determines in this matter also, that the good arising from one cause should be powerful, but evil from many causes should be weak. Hence it is, therefore, that a just government should be of one, in order that it should be strong. But if it declines into an unjust one, it is better that it should be of many, that it may be weaker, and that the rulers may embarrass and thwart each other. Therefore 'inter injusta' *democratic* government is more tolerable, but tyranny truly is worst of all.

"If a ruler govern a multitude of free men for the common good of the multitude, the government will be good and just, such as becomes freemen.* But if the government be conducted not for the common good of the multitude, but for the private good of the ruler, the government will be unjust and perverse. Whence the Lord threatens such rulers through Ezechiel, saying, 'Woe to the shepherds who feed themselves,' as if seeking their private personal advantage; 'should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds?' That is, as shepherds ought to seek the good of the flock, so rulers ought each to seek the good of the multitude subject to him. If, therefore, the government by one becomes so unjust as that he seeks only his private advantage, and not the good of the multitude subject to him, *such a ruler is*

called a tyrant, a title derived from strength, because he oppresses by power; *he does not govern by justice*. But an unjust government when conducted not by one but by many, if by a few it is called oligarchy, to wit, when a few, through the influence of their wealth, oppress the people, differing only in number from a tyrant. But if the unjust government be in the hands of many, it is then called a democracy, that is, the dominion of the people, when, to wit, the populace by the power of their multitude oppress the rich. For thus a whole people would be as one tyrant. In like manner a just government ought to be distinguished. If it be administered by any numerous body, it is called *politia*, as when a military body govern in a city or province. If it be administered *by a few virtuous men*, the government is called an aristocracy; and if a just government belong to one, he is properly called a king. Whence the Lord says by Ezechiel, 'My servant David will be king over all, and he will be one pastor over all these.' Hence it is manifestly shown, that what constitutes a kingly government is, that he who governs should be one, and that he should be *a pastor seeking not his own good, but the common good of the multitude.*"*

"If a tyrant be avaricious, he amasses wealth at the expense of his subjects. If he be sanguinary, he makes no account of shedding blood. Hence it is said in Ezechiel, 'Her princes in the midst of her, are like wolves ravening for prey to shed blood.' Therefore, there is no security, all things are unsettled when the law is abandoned, nothing can be steady or relied on which depends on the will or rather caprice of an individual. They burden their subjects not only in material things; they are inimical even to their intellectual advantages (spiritualia bona), because their object is to rule, not to benefit. They also thwart every undertaking of their subjects, suspecting that the prosperity of their subjects would be prejudicial to their unjust domination. The good are greater objects of suspicion to tyrant rulers than the base. They, therefore, labour to prevent their subjects from becoming virtuous, lest assuming a spirit of magnanimity, they

* Cap. 1, p. 161.

should refuse to endure unjust domination. They also prevent a union of friendship from growing strong among their serfs, and thus cause men to distrust one another, so that nothing by union can be effected against the government. *Hence they sow discord and nourish it when existing;* hence they prohibit those things which promote union among their subjects, such as marriages, festive intercourse, and other things by which confidence and familiarity are produced among men. They also strive to prevent them becoming powerful or rich, because, judging of their subjects according to the standard of their own malice, they fear that their subjects, imitating themselves, might use their power and wealth to inflict injury; whence Job says of the tyrants, 'The sound of their terror is always in their ears; and when all things are peaceful, no one plotting evil against them, they often suspect treachery.' . . . . . .

"It is also natural, that men brought up under terror should degenerate into persons of slavish dispositions, and should become very timid and incapable of any manly and daring enterprise (virile opus et strenuum), an assertion which is proved by the conduct of countries that had been for a long time under despotic government. Solomon says, 'When the impious are in power, men hide away,' in order to escape the cruelty of the tyrants, nor is it astonishing, for a man governing without law and according to his own caprice, differs in nothing from a beast of prey; hence, Solomon designates an impious ruler over an impoverished people, a roaring lion and a ravenous bear.* Because, therefore, the government of one is to be preferred, which is the best, and because this government is liable to degenerate into tyranny, which has been proved to be the worst, hence the most diligent care is to be taken so to manage the establishment of a king over the people, that he cannot fall into tyranny.

"The first thing necessary for the election of a king is, that a man who by nature and disposition is totally averse to tyranny, be advanced to the sceptre by those whose duty it is. Wherefore Samuel, praising the providence of God with refer-

* Cap. 3. pp. 161-62.

ence to the institution of royalty, says, 'He sought for Himself a man according to His own heart.' The next thing necessary is, that the government of the kingdom be so disposed of, *as to remove from the king* who has been elected, *all occasions of falling into tyranny*. Also, let his power be so confined or moderated, that he cannot without difficulty fall into tyranny. In fine, we must endeavour to foresee the opportunities he may have of changing from a mild to a tyrannical government. And indeed it is much better, if the tyranny be not excessive, to endure it for a time, than by a revolt to implicate oneself in many dangers, which may be more grievous than the tyranny itself. For it may happen, that those who revolt may not succeed, and by thus provoking the tyrant, subject themselves to more cruelty than they had before endured. But even supposing that any individual succeeded against the tyrant, thence most injurious dissensions among the people frequently arise, for the multitude may divide into party factions, either at the moment in which they are warring with the tyrant, or after they have subdued him. It sometimes also happens, that he, through whose means the tyrant has been expelled by the multitude, while in power seizes on the sovereign authority; and fearing to suffer from another what his predecessor suffered from him, oppresses his subjects with far greater severity. It is of frequent occurrence in royalty, that the latter possessor is more cruel than he that went before, for he not only allows the grievances inflicted by his predecessor to continue, but also increases them from the malice of his own heart.

"It seems better that proceedings be taken against the cruelty of a ruler, by no other than the public authority. For, first, if it belongs of right to the public to choose for themselves a king, it belongs, consequently, to them either to dethrone him if he abuse his authority, or to set limits to his power. . . . Thus the Romans banished from the kingdom, on account of his tyranny and that of his children, Tarquin the Proud, whom they themselves had advanced to sovereignty, and in consequence instituted the lesser authority of the consuls. Thus

also Domitian, who succeeded the very mild emperors, Vespasian, his father, and Titus, his brother, was killed by the senate, whilst he was exercising tyranny, and all his unjust decrees were repealed. Whence, blessed John, the evangelist and beloved disciple of our Lord, was recalled to Ephesus, by a decree of the senate, from the island of Patmos, to which, by order of Domitian, he had been banished. . . . .

"But if, in short, no human power can withstand tyranny, we must have recourse to God, who is our helper in our distresses and tribulations, for it is in his power to turn the cruel heart of a tyrant into meekness, according to those words of Solomon: 'The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, whithersoever he will he shall turn it.' (12 Par. alias Wisd. xxi. 1.) He turned into clemency the cruelty of king Assuerius, who was contriving the death of the Jewish people. It is he who converted the cruel king Nabuchodonosor, and made him bear testimony to his divine power. 'Therefore,' says he, 'I, Nabuchodonosor, do *now* praise, and magnify, and glorify the King of heaven: because all his works are true, and his ways judgments, and them that walk in pride he is able to abase.' (Dan. iv. 34.) But those tyrants, whom he judges unworthy of conversion, he can either destroy or reduce to nothing, according to Ecclesiasticus, x. 17. 'God hath overturned the thrones of proud princes, and hath set up the meek in their stead.' For he, on beholding the affliction of his people in Egypt, and hearing their groans, plunged the cruel Pharaoh with his whole army into the sea; for it is he who, having cast the above-mentioned proud Nabuchodonosor not only from his throne, but also from the society of men, changed him into a beast. Nor is his hand shortened so that he could not now liberate his people from their tyrants; for he promises, by the mouth of the prophet Isaïas, that he will give his people rest from the labour, and confusion, and hard servitude in which they have been plunged; and in xxxiv. 10, of Ezechiel, he says, 'I will deliver my flock from their mouth,' that is, of those pastors who feed themselves. But that people may deserve to receive this benefit from God, they ought to refrain from sin.

"The government of tyrants cannot be long lived, since it is hateful to the public; for that cannot be of long continuance, which is repugnant to the wishes of the many. The present life never passes without adversity, wherefore an opportunity cannot be wanted for revolting against a tyrant; and when a favourable opportunity occurs, then also is found some one to profit by it, for the people will very willingly follow him who revolts. And the revolution will scarcely be void of effect, since it is accompanied with the good will of the public. Wherefore the dominion of a tyrant can scarcely be prolonged for any length of time. This is also very evident to any person who considers whence or how it is that the dominion of tyrants is preserved; for it is not preserved by love, since the friendship of the subject multitude for the tyrant is evidently either very slight or none at all.

"Tyrants cannot trust the loyalty of their subjects, for among the populace virtue is not found to exist to such an extent as to hinder them from shaking off the yoke of extraordinary oppression....

"Wherefore it follows, that the rule of tyrants is to be supported by fear alone; and their whole aim is to have themselves feared by their subjects. But fear is a weak foundation, because those who are kept under obedience by fear, never let any opportunity escape, in which they can hope for impunity, of rebelling against their rulers, and that too with proportionably greater ardour, as by fear they were restrained, just like water, shut up by force, which gushes out the more impetuously when a passage has been opened for its escape. Nor is fear itself free from danger, since from too great a fear many fall into despair; but despair of safety precipitates people boldly to attempt any thing.*

"Wherefore a tyrant's government cannot be of long continuance. This is apparent, no less from example than reason,

* Had Bacon those *words* in remembrance when he said in his Essay on Seditions: "For they are most dangerous discontents where the fear is greater than the feeling; grief has bounds, but fear has none"?

to any one who takes the trouble of reflecting on the actions of the ancients and the events of modern times."

The doctrine, that tyranny is oftener found in the government of many than that of one, and therefore that the latter is to be preferred, is advocated, if not successfully, at least with great ability, in the fifth chapter of his treatise.

"When we must select between two things, to each of which danger is attached, we ought to take that from which the smallest evil follows. But from monarchy, even though it should be converted into tyranny, less evil results than from the government of many nobles, when it is corrupted. For dissension, which for the most part arises from the government of many, is opposed to the well-being of peace, which is the principal thing in a social multitude, and which at least is not destroyed by tyranny; only something that is the good of individuals is threatened, unless there should have been an excess of tyranny which would attack the entire community. Therefore the government of an individual is preferable to that of many, although evils should spring from both. Besides, it seems that we ought to avoid that from which great evils can oftener arise; but greatest evils for the multitude follow more frequently from the government of many than from that of one. Because it oftener happens that out of many, some one falls off from the intention of the common good than if there were one only. But if any one out of many governors should turn away from the intention of the common good, the danger of dissension hangs over the multitude of their subjects; because it follows, that when dissension exists among the heads it should exist also among the members. But if one should have the government, he would for the most part regard the common good; or if he should divert his attention from it, it does not immediately follow that he intends the oppression of his subjects, which is an excess of tyranny, and holds, as was already shown, the highest step in bad government. Therefore the dangers which spring from the government of one, are more to be guarded against. Nay, it does not less often occur that the government of many

is turned into tyranny than that of one, but perhaps more frequently. For it often happens, in the government of many, that when any dissension arises, one vanquishes the others and usurps to himself the government of the people." *

Finally, the resumè of all the reasoning in the treatise just quoted, is to be found in his Summa Theologiæ, a work of unequalled excellence. In that work we find the following proposition, in plain intelligible language, which Paley never could have ventured to put forth in the same explicit terms, and yet which is the doctrine of the rebel lords and prelates who became "the patriots" of 1688.

"A tyrannical government is unjust, being administered not for the common good, but for the private good of the ruler. Therefore the disturbance of this rule is not sedition, unless when the overthrow of tyranny is so inordinately pursued, that the multitude suffers more from the disturbance than from the existence of the government. Magis autem tyrannus sæditiosus est, qui in populo sibi subjecto discordias et seditiones nutrit, ut tutius dominari possit; hoc enim tyrannicum est, cum sit ordinatum ad bonum proprium præsidentis cum multitudinis nocumento." †

Away then with the trash of the political theologians, which is poured forth in solemn, specious, sanctimonious language in the pulpit, in the press, and in public assemblies, on the subject of the slavish tendencies of the Church of the great body of the Christian world, and of the teaching of the master-spirits of it of byegone ages. Nothing unfavourable to the moral or material interests of mankind will be found in either. They will stand the scrutiny of modern lore and science, as they have stood the test of time and persecution. They are happily separable from the acts, the policy, and the abuses of the State power of Italian Potentates.

A critical work of great ability gives an admirable notice of Fra Girolamo's disquisition on the same subject.

"The treatise of Savonarola on the government of Florence,

* Cap. v. p. 163, Ibidem. † Vol. xvii. p. 186. Ed. fol. *Ven.* 1787.

written in Italian, by the desire of the Signoria," says Dr. Hafe, in his recent German work, "Neue Propheten," "developes his political opinions, although he does not particularly bring forward the subject of the bearing on them of that superiority he considered Florence possessed in point of religion over other places, nor the details of his theory of a republican form of government. For many years he had, by his writings and preaching, pursued a fourfold aim: to prove the truth of the Christian religion; to establish that the simplicity of a Christian life is the highest wisdom; to foretell future events (some of his predictions were fulfilled at once, while others came to pass shortly afterwards); so, in fine, to support the cause of the new goverment of the State, which was to be improved by enlarging its administrative sphere." On this subject he wishes that all may see "that we preach sound maxims woven in with natural reason and the statutes of the Church."

He treats, first, of the best government for the state of Florence, in which he seeks to blend together his theoretical respect for a monarchy with his leaning to a republic.

God rules the universe in two ways; unreasoning creatures by the law of nature, reasoning creatures by the inborn law of a free being. An isolated man does not suffice for himself; from the wants of men spring the necessity of their living in community. One must be either a god or a beast to be able to live alone. A good government is solicitous for the material and spiritual good of every one; generally speaking, a democratic government is good, an oligarchical government is better, and that of a king is best. For the peace and welfare of a people is an end which it is easier to attain through one than through a few, through a few than through a many, for when all are obliged to fear and love one person, there is much less danger of intriguing. Therefore, to speak absolutely, the government of one person, when it is good, excels all others; but as it often happens that this one person is not good, then it is for the people to decide what is best to be done. Or else, after his death, they should put it to the vote as to what the best

may be; but in that way several chiefs arise, and those who vanquish the others, necessarily become tyrants. Some nations, however, cannot tolerate a monarchical government. A wise man, who has acquired a kingdom, will, before everything else, weigh well the nature and habits of the people; a bold, ardent people, without much genius, as the inhabitants of the north, or, on the other hand, those who have genius, but who are pusillanimous, submit themselves easily to the rule of one person, and live peacably under him, and those who are neither courageous nor clever, submit themselves more easily still; but a clever, brave people will not easily bear being ruled over by one person; to keep such a people in subjection, he would be obliged to tyrannize over them; from the versatility of their genius, they would be continually contriving plots against him; and from their boldness, they would not fear to put them in execution, as has been witnessed in Italy long since. Now of all people, the Florentines have got the greatest cleverness and the boldest spirit. Hence, although a commercial people, they have always succeeded, sooner or later, in obtaining the victory over great princes and tyrants, who have wished to subdue them. Thus it is the nature of this people not to submit to a prince, even though he were good and perfect. The oligarchical form of government does not answer moreover to the habits of this people; for we have seen that the tyrants themselves, who retained for a long time, with great finesse, the management of the affairs of the free states (I allude to the republican magistrates), could only succeed with the greatest adroitness in getting themselves established through the influence of their friends. Now it is a Republic re-established, not by men, but by God, which would alone answer the nature and habits of this people.

The second section, entitled, "the Worst Government for Florence," depicts the rule of the tyrant with the same acute political views which Machiavelli in his book, "the Prince," brings to bear on that subject, for other ends; the more enlightened parts are evidently drawn from other sources. "The worst go-

vernment is that of a single ruler, if he should happen to be bad, on account of the greatness of his power; for the contrary of what should be the *best*, must be the *worst*. The worst tyrant of all, is he who has risen to be one from being a citizen. He is always imagining offences, and seeking to be avenged for them; on the other hand, he easily forgets benefits. He surrounds himself with strangers, because he mistrusts his relatives; he gives the daughters of the noble inhabitants in marriage to his favourites of mean extraction. In his government, he seeks to effect three objects: First, that his subjects may understand nothing of his administration, in order that they may not perceive its wickedness. Second, to nourish dissensions, not merely in the State, but in private families; for a tyrant can only hope to maintain himself by the strifes of the rest of mankind. Third, to humble the powerful, and to ruin distinguished men, he discourages reunions where men might form friendships, least these might lead to conspiracies against him; above all, he sends thither his spies, and tries to make all mistrustful of one another. He has secret understandings with other princes. He harasses the people with taxes for his own emolument; he employs every means for acquiring money to pay soldiers, and provokes useless wars. At the same time, he debauches the people with festivals and theatricals, he maintains singers, builds palaces with the money of the State, and, above all, adorns these palaces with his escutcheons. He behaves mildly in unimportant matters, gives audience sometimes to young people and old persons, and defends them against trivial wrongs. He makes himself appear to be the source of all favours and honours, but ascribes all punishments and executions to the magistrates, justifying himself by saying he could not prevent them.

"He seeks to appear very pious and devout, but he confines himself to externals, such as going to church, giving alms, building churches and chapels. He hates nothing so much as a truly Christian life, because it is opposed to his, and thence he secretly undermines it, and where there is a good bishop, priest, or monk,

particularly if he be one who tells him the truth, he is sure to try and remove him to a distance from the state, or else tries to corrupt him by bribery or flattery. He says himself, and has it promulgated by his accomplices, that he is the support of the State, and the preserver of the public welfare (*conservatore del bene commune*). But nothing is safe under a tyrant, for he wishes to rule everything by his own will, and will not be guided by reason, but only by the passions. God allows a tyrant to reign only to chastise a nation for its sins, and purify it from them; as soon as this object has been attained, the tyrannical government falls to pieces.

"The third section treats of the means by which the present good government of Florence may be retained and continually improved. Riches are not so dangerous to a State (for no one can be so rich as to be able to buy up the majority of a whole nation) as the elevation of individuals and an accumulation of honours, which change, by degrees, a citizen into a tyrant. Therefore, official situations and honours should be distributed with the concurrence of the whole nation. But then, as it is impossible to collect the whole people together, and bring them to concur in the appointment of the magistracy, a number should be elected with their approbation. This number of persons should not be too small, as then they would be liable to be corrupted by money, by their relations, or otherwise, nor too large, which would cause confusion, and the rabble might contrive to insinuate themselves therein; this medium number should be named in full council (*grande consiglio*), as governors of the State. This great council should not be called together too often, nor for trifles, but in regular assemblies; it should be bound by stringent laws, in order not to degenerate into tyranny. Every good citizen should believe that this constitution was accorded to Florence, by the special providence of God, to protect her from impending difficulties. But God has ordained that the gifts he presents to us should be imperfect at first, in order that with the understanding and free will which he has given us, we should perfect them. From this it follows that to perfect the gift of a good form of government, four things are requisite. First, the fear of God; secondly, to

be so much imbued with a public spirit as to despise all selfish interests; thirdly, that the citizens should love one another, and forget all past causes of hatred; fourthly, that they should exercise justice. If they do not these things, although the government established by God may exist for a while, it shall become extinguished by degrees, and the sons of Florence shall lose by degrees this precious gift of a perfect form of government. Already has God given signs of his anger. To the discontented, he says—'You shall be always restless, and shall carry about a hell within your own bosoms; both this world and the next shall be lost to you.'

"It may be perceived, from his syllogism about the misery of tyrants and their accomplices, (among whom he places the citizens who are dissatisfied with the republican government, and who would be tyrants, only they have not the power to be so,) concerning the misery of this world and the glorious liberty of the next, and about the happiness of free self-governing citizens, what pleasure Savonarola must have taken in his political speculations. By serving the State, in his view, eternal felicity is earned; he who governs, resembles God much more than he who is governed; in free states, no one is impelled to wickedness through poverty or compulsion; worldly advantages are promoted along with spiritual ones, under good rulers, spiritual and temporal; such a State becomes a Paradise upon earth, where there is jubilee and singing of psalms; the children become as angels in proportion as they are brought up to a Christian and peaceful life."*

The chief end and objects of good government undoubtedly are not now better understood than they were in ancient times; but what was formerly known only to philosophers, is now comprehended by the people.

Plato understood by "good government" one "whose cares extended equally to the whole body of the state, without favour to one portion more than to another." It is given as an instance of the wisdom of Lycurgus, that, when he came to Delphos to

*Dr. Hafe, Neue Propheten, p. 307, 12mo. *Leipsic*, 1851.—I am indebted to a lady, well acquainted with the German language, Miss Walsh, for the translation of that portion of Dr. Hafe's work which treats of Savonarola.

consult the oracle of Apollo, on the subject of the perfection of his laws, he enquired not concerning the duration of his power, or the extension of his authority; his only question was, "Whether the laws were good, and tended to make the Spartans happy?" When he received the answer he desired, he judged that his mission was at an end; and, seeing that his object was accomplished, he is said to have died content.

Cicero maintained that a State could not be governed well without a strict observance of justice: "Sine summa justitia respublica regi non posset." This injustice is not a question of creed, or class, or colour, every member of the State is entitled to it; and for every denial of it, the government gathers up wrath for the days to come—for the days of reckoning will come, though it may not be given to the wronged and oppressed to be made the judges or the avengers of the insulted laws of justice, even of that little portion of the latter which is known, or dreamt of, or enjoyed on this side the grave. The relative duties of protection and obedience impose obligations which are as binding on the prince as on the people.

A failure of these on the part of either, endangers the compact, and many signal failures tend inevitably to dissolve it. "In all governments," says Lord Bolingbroke, "there are either expressly or tacitly certain conditions between the people and their rulers, which, in conscience, they are both bound to preserve. In more arbitrary governments, the traces of an original compact are less discernible." "Nobody can be so weak or so wicked as to deny that the prosperity of mankind is one of the great ends of government." ("On Liberty," p. 285.) "It is the nature of all governments to degenerate," we are truly told in his essay "On the Power of the Prince;" "but the representative government has this advantage, that its forms admit of a frequent renewal of the constitution." In arbitrary governments, on the other hand, where Machiavelli's position is peculiarly applicable to their infirmities, "that all institutions need to be frequently brought back to their first principles," rapacity and tyranny augment with decrepitude, and they die

of themselves as surely, though not perhaps so speedily, as they might do at the hands of their own slaves and subjects." The destinies of states and kingdoms are not left to the blind government of bad rulers, or the capricious will of unworthy princes; nor are the designs of Providence so easily discoverable to us, as to be promoted at all times, and when and where oppression stalks by means of revolt, or the substitution of one form of government for another.

The expectations of the people by whom revolutions have been made, and the form of government altered, are always of a nature that renders it impossible they can be realised.

"Fare ogni cosa *di nuovo* in quello stato; nelle Città fare *nuovi governi con nuovi nomi*, con nuova autorità, con nuovi nomini, fare i poveri ricchi, disfare delle vecchie città, cambiare gli abitatori da un luogo ad un altro, e in somma, non lasciare cosa niuna intatta, e che non vi sia nè grado, nè ordine, nè stato, nè richezza, che chi la tiene non riconosca da te."*

The interposition of Savonarola in secular affairs, though intended by him to promote spiritual interest, produced results that were ultimately favourable only to factions.

The re-action against his influence with the government, became manifestly perilous to himself towards the close of 1495.

Among his principal enemies, who so hastily he had to dread and to guard against, was a high officer of the government, the Gonfaloniere de Giustizia, chosen soon after the expulsion of the Medici. This functionary, named Filippo Corbelli, succeeded in stirring up the high dignitaries of the Church against the father, and causing a synod to be called, for the purpose of inquiring into the orthodoxy of the preaching of Savonarola.

This measure was concurred in by the abbots, priors, and presidents of nearly all the monasteries and convents of Florence; all the masters in theology, two canons of the Duomo, and various others: among whom was the celebrated Marsilius Ficinus, a canon of the Duomo, a great admirer of Plato, who continually kept a lamp burning in his chamber, before a bust of the philosopher.

* Machiavel, Discorsi, lib. i. cap. 6.

This council having assembled in the great hall of the palace, the cause for which they were called together was explained. After some time, Fra Girolamo was sent for, to be examined before the council. He came to it attended by one of his faithful brethren, Fra Domenico da Pescia.

The Gonfaloniere de Giustizia, who took part in the proceedings, informed him, on taking his seat, that the council required some information with respect to his preaching, and therefore he should answer to the questions put to him. A Master of Theology of the Dominican order, Maestro Giovanni Carlo, of S. Maria Novella, greatly famed for his knowledge of canon law, though a person of very small stature, therefore called *Garofanino*, began to reflect severely on Fra Girolamo's mode of preaching and acting, saying that he ought not to meddle in affairs of State, nor occupy himself with matters which did not concern him, reminding him of St. Paul's observation—*nemo militans Deo, implicat se negociis secularibus.*

"Then Fra Girolamo," says Burlamacchi, "who was naturally mild, seeing that the council was assembled with views hostile to him, and having heard the objection that had been raised by the theologian, replied with great meekness, that Maestro Carlo was mistaken about his mode of preaching—there was no novelty in it; it was as old as the Apostles and the Saints of former days, and was in accordance with the doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures. It was in accordance with the doctrine of all other true Apostolic preachers; and he, Fra Girolamo, did not believe that such mode of preaching was inconvenient, seeing that many Saints and just men had used the same, as we read in the book, 'De Pulchritudine S. Mariæ Novellæ;' and moreover, when any business is so ordered, that the honour of God and the good of our neighbour are kept in view (in the transaction of it), it ought not to be called secular, but rather spiritual and holy. But, nevertheless, it appeared to him a matter with very great evil attaching to it, that friars of his own order should be the first to raise their voice in opposition to a brother preacher, and that in him the words of prophecy were verified

—'The sons of my mother have fought against me.' But still it was most gratifying to him to conform himself, even in trials of that kind, to the example of the Divine Saviour.

"Then each member of the council, one after another, spake on the same subject, and Fra Girolamo replied with benignity to each, breaking every flimsy argument of theirs with the heavy hammer of Sacred Scriptures. Thus passed more than two hours. Then, feeling that things were taking a turn that was reflecting discredit on them, one member rose abruptly, and said to Fra Girolamo, 'Speak openly and clearly; have you those things from God or not, so that all may believe in you if they be from God?' To which the father replied, 'I have spoken always before the world, and in private I have not spoken.' To which words no reply was made.

"The council then differing among themselves, an end was put to the proceedings, without coming to any definite conclusion. The members were dismissed, the meekness and sound doctrine of the father being given all due praise and honour."*

Burlamacchi adds, "It was a special grace of God which Fra Girolamo possessed, that when he entered into argument, he always did so with serenity of spirit, without ever becoming excited or raising his voice in the heat of passion, as men in argument generally do, and as John Pico, of Mirandola, and Domenico Beneviene, and others, have observed." Whether the members of the synod had reason to be satisfied with the explicitness of the answer given to the last question put to Fra Girolamo, possibly the reader may not be so entirely persuaded as Burlamacchi. The words of our Saviour can never be applied to our own circumstances with too much humility and care, to avoid even the semblance of spiritual pride.

Savonarola felt, no doubt, he was encompassed by his enemies, who were ready to seize on any admission or avowal of the spiritual gifts that were ascribed to him, and therefore thought it necessary to shroud his thoughts in vague and mysterious language.

* Burlamacchi, p. 547.

Let us see how the enemies of Savonarola view this question of the interference in politics, as they are represented by one modern critic, who is a faithful exponent of all their adverse opinions.

Bayle says, that "Savonarola concerned himself too much in political affairs, which is always blameable in persons who have dedicated themselves to the ministry of the word of God, and particularly so, when they meddle with the government, in a State which is divided into factions, as was the case with the republic of Florence, which was torn by the dissensions of two parties—the aristocracy and the democracy."

On this subject, Bayle observes—"He began by little and little to show some marks of his secret ambition, when so soon as in the year 1494, as he himself says in the book he wrote on his prophecies, he mixed with politicians, and procured himself to be called to the council, which at that time was held at Florence, for establishing a popular government, where he excited all the citizens to embrace it with one consent; and proposed to them four or five points of great consequence, in order to support themselves in it, saying, that these were revealed to him by God Almighty, and that they ought punctually to observe them, if they were desirous of making their state the most flourishing in all Italy. Whereupon, though affairs had not taken the turn that he expected, he nevertheless did not fail to improve, day after day, his credit with the people, teaching, as in the sermons which he preached in the year 1489, on St. John's revelation, that the Church was threatened with a speedy reformation, and that the petty kings and tyrants of Italy would shortly feel the avenging scourge of all their iniquities. He proved this in such a manner by the passages of the Holy Scriptures, and by maintaining the certainty of his revelations, that after the expedition of Charles the Eighth into Italy, which he had foretold and proclaimed two years before, everybody so confidently expected that he would return again, as Savonarola affirmed, that they did not lose hopes of it till the year 1498,

in which King Charles, and he that had favoured him so much in his sermons, were translated from this life into another.

"He had incurred the hatred not only of Pope Alexander the Sixth, and of the greatest part of the clergy, against whom he used to declaim in the pulpit, but likewise of all the principal citizens of Florence, by the execution which he advised to be made of seven or eight of the chief noblemen amongst them; so that having no friends left but the partizans of Paul Antony Soderini, who made use of him to support the popular government, in opposition to Guy Antony Vespucci, who wanted to establish an aristocratical form, they were not able to resist those of the contrary party, who during this commotion broke open the gates of his convent, and dragged him to punishment. This they did, in order that their city might have rest and quiet, by the death of that man who kept them at variance with the Pope, on account of his new doctrine, and nourished factions and divisions amongst them, which, if they had been suffered to go any further, could not have failed to end in the ruin of their State and authority.

"Had he meddled with the government with no other view but to maintain concord, and had succeeded in his design, he could hardly be excused; for, as laymen have no business with things appertaining to the altar, so monks have as little to do with political affairs: every one should keep within the bounds of his own profession.

"What shall we say, then, of a man who immersed himself wholly in cabals of State, and occasioned so many troubles and divisions? Paul Jovius is moderate enough in the censure which he passes upon him. . . . . 'He was chiefly set against the family de Medicis,' says Jovius, 'and opposed that form of a republic which, as he said, was liable to be governed by the violence and lust of a few great men. For this reason, he had evidently divided the city into parties, and was very justly censured by grave and wise citizens; because, that laying aside his religious profession, and the contemplation of divine matters, he had concerned himself in the management of the

State, with more ambition than became a man of his holy profession.' "

"See, in Guicciardini," continues Bayle, "how he declared it to be the will of God, that the government of the people should be set up, and nevertheless *he consented* that they should infringe the prerogatives of that form of government, in the point of executing four or five persons that were condemned for high treason.

"Their relations having appealed from the sentence to the great council of the people, by virtue of a law which had been made at the establishment of the democracy, those who had been authors of the condemnation, fearing lest compassion for their age and quality, and the multitude of their relations, should mitigate in the minds of the people the severity of the sentence, bestirred themselves so much, that they procured it to be debated before a smaller number of citizens, whether they should be suffered to proceed or not in their appeal, where, as the advantage both in number and authority was on their side, who maintained that it was a dangerous thing, and might very possibly end in sedition, and that the laws themselves allowed they might be dispensed with in the like case, to prevent tumults; some of the chief magistrates were impetuously, and in a manner by force and threatenings, forced to consent, that, notwithstanding the appeal was lodged, the execution should be performed that very night; and for this, the friends of Savonarola were more zealous than the rest, to the great scandal of him who did not dissuade, even his own followers, from violating a law which he himself had proposed a few years before as very useful, and almost necessary for the preservation of liberty. We may discover in this conduct of Savonarola some marks of the unregenerated man, and of the unchristian politician. Note, that Varillas supposes that this monk endeavoured to save the lives of these State criminals. Had this been true, Guicciardini would not have said just the reverse. I add, that Antonio Maria Gratiana, Bishop of Amelia, observes, that the relations of the condemned persons in vain besought Valori and

Savonarola upon their knees; they could not obtain for them that they should enjoy the privilege of an appeal to the people."*

Bayle, in his elaborate article on Savonarola, in "The Critical Dictionary," has brought to his attempt to sketch the character of the Dominican friar of Ferrara, a certain amount of that critical acumen for which he was remarkable, in dealing with contradictory accounts of occurrences long past, the real facts of which had been misrepresented, lost sight of, suppressed, or overlaid.

But Bayle could not help looking on any highly-gifted man, who was profoundly convinced of the truths of Christianity, with misgivings of his sincerity. He felt a passionate interest in the task, of setting Savonarola before the world as a fanatic and likewise an impostor.

Bayle, however, it would appear from his article, had not given himself the trouble to read the works of Savonarola. He composed his article from the productions of those who wrote against the Dominican.

But supposing the principal writings of Savonarola had been within the reach of Bayle, such, for instance, as the tracts on "Mental Prayer," the work entitled "Triumphus Crucis," and the other admirable performance, "De simplicitate veræ Christianæ," it is hardly to be expected that Bayle could have entered into the spirit of such performances.

Hume, with all his powers, would be incapable of appreciating the peculiar merits of "The Imitation of Christ," ascribed to Thomas à Kempis. Carlyle, with all his genius, would in all probability see nothing in the sublimest passages of the most spiritual of the fragments of Blaise Pascal, but visionary ideas that should be *squelched.*

Yet Savonarola, Thomas à Kempis, and Pascal, have left works which will be probably admired when those of Bayle, and Hume, and Carlyle will scarcely be remembered.

So much for Bayle. If his observations be just, if his alleged

* Bayle's Critical Dict. vol. v. p. 62.

facts be true, the memory of Savonarola should perish. But if his statements of what he calls facts, are not founded on truth, and his conclusions are erroneous and unjust, then is his own memory deserving of obloquy.

The execution of the five conspirators took place the 21st of August, 1497. The power and influence of Savonarola in the government was then gone. He had no act or part in the proceedings against the conspirators. The proofs of this assertion will be found elsewhere.

CHAPTER XIII.

LETTERS OF SAVONAROLA TO HIS FAMILY AND FRIENDS, FROM THE LETTERE INEDITE OF THE PADRE MARCHESE, O.S.D. RECENTLY BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

"Avea nel conversar tal gentilezza,
Che non ciascun si confacea æquale
Affabil, dolce e senza alcun aspriezza,
Era di tal judizio naturale.
Oltr' alla sua scienzia e gran bonta,
Ch'al secul piu non era un simil tale.

Clemente, pio, e pien di carita,
Longanimo, fidele, e di gran core,
Pien di virtu e pien d'ogni umilta,
Era di povertà gran amatore,
Ma sordidezza avea molto à descaro:
Che Sempre visse netto el Salvatore."
Vita de Sav. par Fra Benedetto, sive Cedrus Libani.

THE most valuable information concerning the private life of Savonarola, is to be found in a recent publication of the Padre Marchese, O.S.D., containing several unpublished letters of Savonarola, and official documents relating to his affairs with Rome, in the thirty-seventh volume of the Archivio Storico Italiano, Appendix No. 23.

Here we find a multitude of chronological errors pointed out, which have crept into nearly all the biographies of Savonarola, whose authors have derived their information from Burlamacchi, and taken the dates they found in his work, without considering that Burlamacchi following the old style of computation—*ab incarnatione*—anticipated, by the term of a year, the period of which he treated according to the new mode of computing time.

Amongst the letters previously inedited, and apparently un-

known to former biographers, we find two letters to his mother, and several others to his sisters, brothers, disciples, and most intimate friends, of great importance, as throwing a new light on his character, as manifested in his relations of love and friendship with his nearest and dearest friends, and by the tenderness of heart, the simplicity of mind, and innate excellence of disposition which they exhibit, enabling us to form a more just opinion than we were before in a condition to arrive at, on the subject of that political ambition and passion for pre-eminence in the state with which he is charged with being animated.

Those letters of Savonarola seemed to me so important, as illustrative of his private character and relations with his friends and family, and so calculated to enable us better to appreciate the motives of ambition and vain glory ascribed to him in his relations with the ruling powers of the republic in the years 1494 and 1495, that I have not separated them, and placed the various communications with the matter of the several years corresponding with their dates, deeming it better they should follow consecutively, as they have been given by Padre Marchese.

The first letter in this precious collection is addressed to his mother—*A' Elena Buonacorsi, Sua Madre.* It occupies three pages and a half. In this letter, written at Pavia, the 25th January, 1490, he speaks of a journey to Genoa, being commanded by his superiors to preach during the Lent in that city, a circumstance which none of his biographers seem to have been aware of. In this letter, he alludes to misfortunes and embarrassments which had befallen his family, and which he knew his mother had to contend with. He tells her, his prayers were constantly addressed to God for her. "For her, he knew not what else to do. If it were otherwise, and he could help her, he would aid her willingly. But once having been free, he had made himself a slave for the love of Jesus Christ; and that love of his had made a new man of him.

"Then, in all things," he says, "I seek the glory of that liberty of the children of God, and for this end I study all that I can to serve

Him, and to avoid, by any earthly or carnal affection, to withdraw myself from the work assigned me for his love, voluntarily labouring in his vineyard in various cities, so that I may not only save my own soul, but also the souls of others, fearing even greatly the divine judgment if I failed to do these things; for if He has given me talent for this work, it is necessary I should expend it in the manner that is pleasing to him. So, my most loved mother, do not lament my being far from you, and going about from place to place, for I do all this for the salvation of many souls, preaching, exhorting, confessing, reading, and giving counsel, and I go nowhere except for these ends, for which also I am always sent by my superiors. And, therefore, you ought rather to be comforted, in feeling that God had been pleased to choose a child of yours for this mission.

"Had I remained at Ferrara, be assured I could not have done the good I have done elsewhere, for no persons devoted to religion, or at least very few, ever effect much by the labours of a holy life in their own land. And hence it is that we find in the Holy Scriptures, so frequently the servants of God directed to go forth from their own country, as if it were that so much confidence is not placed in a teacher in his own land as in a stranger, whether in his sermons or in his counsel; and, therefore, the Lord said that 'a prophet had no honour in his own country,' and hence it was that He found none in his own country. . . . .

"I have not written thus of those matters (his labours and the fruits of them in divers cities), on account of the praise of some persons, nor because praise is gratifying to me, but to shew you my reasons for quitting Ferrara and remaining from it, so that you should know this is done voluntarily, on the conviction that I am doing what is most pleasing to God, and most serviceable to the souls of my fellow-creatures, which objects, in my sight, are of more importance than all the treasures of the world, and in comparision with which, in my estimation, all things are as dirt. And, therefore, *Madre Mio Honorandissima*, do not grieve at this, because the more pleasing I make myself to God, the

more efficacious will be my prayers to Him for you. Do not consider yourself abandoned by God in your tribulations, but rather that you have abandoned Him. And if His scourges come upon you, that it is to compel you to return to Him. Perhaps it is by these means He wishes to save you and yours, and is pleased to hear my prayers, in which I do not pray for worldly goods but for His graces for you, and that he may conduct you to eternal life, by whatever paths it may please Him to lead you in this life.

"I intended to write only a few words, but love has set no limits to them, and I have opened to you my heart more than I intended doing. Know then, finally, that my mind is more fixed than ever in the resolution to expend the powers of my mind and body, and all the knowledge that God has given me, and all the gifts of his grace, for the love of God and the good of the souls of men, and because I cannot do this in my own native place, I will endeavour to do it elsewhere. Therefore, I pray you, that this course of mine you will not try to impede, knowing, assuredly, that whenever I can help you in any way, I will do it; and when there is a necessity for my going to Ferrara, it will not give me trouble to go there. But, without necessity, it would be in my opinion a grave sin for small objects to leave the works of God which are committed to me."*

The second letter in the collection, written the 8th March, 1490, is addressed from Florence to Fra Domingo da Pescia, who at that time was preaching in Pisa.

Fra Girolamo begins his letter by announcing: "Our work prospers well, for God has wonderfully aided it. I will relate all things that have happened to you on your return—now the opportunity does not serve for so doing. Many have doubted, and still doubt, if it should not happen to me as it did happen to Fra Bernardino (St. Bernardino di monte Feltro, who was banished from Florence for preaching against usury). Certainly, in some respects, I have not been free from danger; but I have always acted without fear in God's service, knowing, as the holy Scriptures say, *the heart of the king is in the hands of the Lord,*

* Lettere Inedite di Sav. p. 113.

and, therefore, it might please him to turn it. I hope in the Lord that by our mouth his word will have much fruit; for every day he consoles me, and when I am downcast he comforts me by the voice of his spirit, which many times says to me, '*Fear not*, since, of a certainty, God inspires you—*di securamente cio che Dio t'inspira*—for the Lord is with you: the Scribes and Pharisees contend against you, but they will not prevail.' . . . . I preach frequently on the renovation of the church, and the tribulations which are to come, not absolutely, (in the way of prophecy he evidently intends to be understood,) but always on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, so that no one can reprehend me, save those who do not wish to live well."*

The third letter in the collection is addressed to his youngest brother, Albert, a physician of high reputation, in this manner: —Egregio Artium et Medicinæ Doctore Maestro Alberto Savonarole fratri suo amantissimo, dated 28th of October, 1495, exhorting him to assist his eldest brother, Ognibene, who had fallen into great poverty, as a duty of charity he owed to God, and of affection towards a brother in adversity.

The fourth letter in the collection (the second to his mother), dated from Florence, the 5th November, 1495, addressed to his mother, *Alla Madrè; Jesus Mariæ Filius*, begins with these words: "Most honoured and most loved mother, the divine peace and consolation be with you. Having heard of the death of our uncle Borso, your brother, I began to think what were the designs of Providence with regard to our house; for the more I prayed, and have prayed for it, the more every day it has been stricken by God. And, truly, I am thankful to the most wise and beneficent God, the Creator and Redeemer of our souls, who does for them much better than we know how to ask or think what is good for them. I believe that my prayers are heard more, or for a better end, than I had in view: because, praying as I have done for the salvation of your souls, I see it approaching to you, if you will only approach towards it. But the more the soul is attached to earthly things, the farther is it from its eternal end—God.

* Lettere Inedite di Sav. p. 116.

"Thus I shew you clearly that human hopes are blind, and false, and insufficient to elevate your soul to heavenly things. Your Creator lays his hand on you often to awaken you, in order that you should rise from the heavy sleep in which you have long lain, loving more the present than the future life. These, my dear mother, are the sounds of truths from heaven —Questi sono madre mia voce dal cielo. Shut them up in your heart. They are voices which cry aloud to you to withdraw from earthly things, and invite you to the love of Jesus Christ. Believe me, mother, sisters, and brother, all most beloved, that the most sweet Jesus, our all-powerful Saviour, comes straight towards you, exclaiming, *Come to my kingdom—leave this world full of iniquity.* Why do you still sleep? He who is desirous of your salvation, endeavours to awaken you. Open, then, your eyes, and consider if, from the beginning to the end of the world, if ever any servant of God was free from tribulations, and temptations, and persecutions. God scourges His children, in order that they may not set their hopes on earthly things. He casts away from them every support, every root, every trust; so that, seeing themselves abandoned finally by the world (in their trusts), having no other resource, they must come to Him to cast themselves into His arms. Oh, good God! Oh, inifinite mercy! Oh, inestimable charity! that He should come to our hearts, as if he had a great necessity for us. ....

"And I pray you, therefore, my sisters, my spiritual children, Beatrice and Clara, that you would resolve to give yourselves up totally to prayer, and to leave all vanities, not only in act and deed, but in worldly attachments, and betake yourselves to a retired life and holy reading. Be constant in prayer! Care not for company, neither to see or to be seen. Contemplate Jesus Christ in his life, step by step. Do not seek the company of men, but keep your heart constantly with Jesus Christ, and He will comfort you more than you can conceive." ....

[He returns apparently to some observation of his mother, with respect to the misfortunes which had fallen on the family.]

——"If you say to me that one is ashamed at falling into

poverty, I reply to you, that no one ought to be ashamed of being in a condition like unto that in which were our Lord Jesus Christ and the blessed Virgin Mary. Where is faith, if we do not believe that the glory which God has promised to those who love Him is immense, ineffable, eternal, and that the pains of hell are horrible! And as it is necessary for us to arrive at one of those regions, why do you not seek to flee from hell and to reach heaven? Here we cannot long remain, but the time we have to live in this other life has no end."

.... "Do not be solicitous about your children. Take care that they be good, not only after the fashion of that goodness which the world lauds, but in conformity with that which pleases God; so that they become devout, given to prayer, to fasting, to the hearing of holy sermons, as the spouses of Christ should be, and be certain that God will have a care of them, and lead them to a better end than they know how to ask for at His hands. And, although they are not in monasteries, they can serve God no less in the world, and be spouses of Christ." ...

Finally, after giving his mother all the comfort that religion could afford for the loss of her brother, and endeavouring to turn the time of mourning to a profitable account, by leading her thoughts from worldly concerns to cares of another sort, he touches on a subject which seemed to be ever present to his mind, his approaching doom. He refers to some rumour that had been promulgated of his death, in a strain that seemed as if he took advantage of it, to prepare his mother's mind for more than the possibility of that event at no distant day. But what mysterious influence leads him at this juncture, involved in no difficulties, attended with apparent dangers to his life, to take occasion of the loss of a mother's brother, and a passing rumour of his own death, to prepare the mind of that mother, cautiously and ambiguously, but still with an evident design clearly visible in the warning, for a greater loss than that which she had just sustained? Here are the words which he addresses to her two years before the time of his martyrdom: "I would wish that such was your faith that, without tears, you could see

them (your own children) die and suffer martyrdom, as that most holy Hebrew woman saw hers martyred—the woman before whom seven holy sons were slain, she encouraging them at the moment of death; and as holy Felicita did, of whom we read in the New Testament. I do not desire this (doom), because I do not wish to have you to require consolation *for such a trial*—for this would be against charity, but in order to diminish the power of grief, *so that if it should come to pass that I should die, you should not give way to too much sorrow.*"*

Two years after the mother received this letter from her son, the tidings were brought from Florence to her at Ferrara, that he had been cast into prison, slandered, tortured, strangled, and that the ashes of the burned body of that beloved child of hers had been thrown into the river; that Alexander the Sixth, the sovereign Pontiff, had not deemed the remains of her poor Girolamo worthy even of the rites of Christian sepulture.

But let us return to this letter. "If the action of time and the mischievous hands of men," says the Padre Marchese, "had destroyed all the other writings of Savonarola, and left this letter alone in safety, it would be enough to prove the strong sense of religion and the sincere piety of the soul of the writer of it."

The fifth letter in the collection, dated the 3rd of November, 1496, is addressed to his "Most beloved sister Beatrice," sending her a little piece of poetry, *officiolo*, "which (he says) he had composed in praise of Saint Mary Magdalen, for the preservation of purity of mind and body, and with them the remission of sins; in order that she might have it in memory, and that it should be as a substitute for a letter which he had intended to write to her."

I am surprised to find the Padre Marchese say there is no account of this small work (operetta) of Savonarola sent to Beatrice. Savonarola does not allude to a work he had written, but to a small piece he had composed, "*Uno Officiola chi ho composto.*"

* Lettere Inedite di Sav. p. 112.

This title of *officiola* he gave to a small poem of great beauty, entitled "Lauda di Santa Maria Magdalena," which is to be found in De Rian's collection of his sacred poetry, and an English version of it in another chapter.

The sixth letter in the collection is addressed to the Count Galeotto Pico della Mirandola (the father of John Francisco, the biographer of Savonarola), wherein he observes to the Count, who was one of the most tyrannical princes of his age, that he had heard his sermons had been reported to his Excellency as being offensive to him personally. He tells the Count he is sorry to be on bad terms with him, "His love for his Excelleney is what it is for all the princes of Italy, and for all mankind, and he was ready, for the good of the Count, and for their salvation, to die." God had bestowed on him, by His grace, the gift of illumination of spirit, whereby he was made acquainted with the calamities that were destined to fall on Italy, her princes, and her people, if they did not repent of their sins. And he warned the Count "there was no remedy for him but recourse to his Saviour, and repentance for his sins, for the scourge was approaching;" ... "and he had thus written to him, not from motives of human respect or fear, nor of love for temporal things; for neither of him, or of the other Italian princes, he desired gold or silver, nor favour, nor fame, nor any transitory advantage, nor reward of any kind: *for as to recompense he had expected none, nor did he now expect any but, infamy and opprobrium, and persecutions, and eventually death*, which he waited for with a great longing, as for his last delight—quia mihi vivere Christus est et mori lucrum."* From the prince to whom he had written in this strain he had not long previously refused a gift of 600 scudi, as a marriage portion for his sister, as we are informed by his son, in his Biography of Fra Girolamo (cap. xi. p. 13).

In the seventh letter in the collection, addressed to the same Count Galeotto of Mirandola, dated the 26th March, 1496, he tells his excellency he had prayed long and assiduously to God for his spiritual welfare, and by the divine illumination he had

* Lettere Inedite di Sav. p. 124.

been moved once more to write to him, and to urge him on the part of God to turn from his evil ways and be converted, and recognise his Creator and Redeemer, and live as it became a Christian. "It was necessary for him to be heartily sorry for his past sins, and to confess them, and in future to abstain from sin, and with all his heart, verily and truly, to reduce his passions and vindictive feelings to the standard of the divine mercy.* Otherwise, let him be advised there was a great scourge hanging over him, and he would be sorely punished in his person and in his house; and, moreover, that his life was only for a short time, and it behoved him to prepare to die well, to live chastely, to restore what he had unjustly taken, and to become reconciled with his brother and with the church: to govern his vassals well, to give them a good example, because their sins would be imputed to him if he failed to do so, and he would be called on to render an account of them.

"And, more than this, he had to say—if the time that remained for him was not devoted to God, as he had been admonished, he would be grievously punished in this world and the next, and his soul would be committed to eternal fire. But if he returned to God, he truly would shew mercy to him. Thus, Signore (he continues), in your hands are life and death. It is for you to make your election, to choose that which is good, or that which is evil. *This letter, when you shall be before the tribunal of Christ, will be laid before you, and you will have no excuse then to make.*

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ illuminate you, and conduct you into the sure harbour of salvation.

"The unprofitable servant of Jesus Christ,

"Fra Girolamo."

The eighth letter of the collection of *Lettere Inedite* is ad-

* This Count Galeotto of Mirandola, at the period of Savonarola's communication, was not only a terror to his vassals, but to his own family: he had his wife and one of his children, about this period, incarcerated in the castle of Mirandola.

dressed, at the instance of the husband and brother of the ladies written to, to Madonna Giovanna Caraffa, the wife of the Count J. Francesco Pico de Mirandola, and Madonna Dianora, the sister of the Count. This letter, dated the 3rd of April, 1497, is one of exhortation to the practice of a religious life, without giving way to scrupulosity and undue anxiety in the efforts made to accomplish this end. Savonarola tells these noble ladies "they must force themselves to taste and to know how good and how sweet is our Lord Jesus Christ, who, although he wishes not, that we should walk in the broad ways of sin, nevertheless does not require of us such rigour and scrupulosity of conscience—*conscientia tanto stretta*—that we should repute every mote a beam.

"Our Saviour desires that we should have the conscience serene, tranquil, peaceful. He did so much for us by his goodness and the effusion of his blood, that we may believe that our minute offences will be easily absorbed in the immensity of the mercy with which the viscera of his love abounds.

"He wills that we should guard as much as lies in our power even from venial sins. Still, he wishes that when man, by his fragility, falls, he shall not afflict himself so, that he shall lose the tranquillity of his mind, but that he should immediately recall the great sweetness of his nature and say: My beneficent Lord will make satisfaction for me, making, however, a firm resolution of faithful service to him.

"For he who makes a scruple of everything unduly, shews that he has small confidence in the divine goodness, which does not require from us more than we can do. But to be in this world without venial sin, we cannot: and to seek to make venial sin mortal, and to unquiet ourselves, is to render the Christian life a slavery, which, by the grace of God, is a true liberty, and to make of religion a law of fear, which is in reality a law of love. Give the heart to our Lord Jesus Christ, and separate yourselves from attachments to earthly things, and serve the Lord with love truly, for he is so loving that he will never be moved to anger when this is done. Even those who do not love

him thus, he continually renovates the hearts of, with a love of the divine spouse, if they only walk in his ways, joyfully meditating often on the eternal felicity which he has prepared for his beloved. The grace of Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."*

The ninth letter in the collection, addressed to his brother, the physician—*A' Maestro Alberto suo fratello*—dated the 24th July, 1497, thus begins:

"Most beloved brother,—Fra Maurelio† is outside Florence, in a place of ours, on account of the pestilence, and especially on account of the death of a member of our community. No others, however, of the community have suffered. The disease in the country is not yet very serious; but the beginning of a great calamity is plainly visible, if God does not interpose his aid in our behalf. More die of a certain pestilential fever than of plague itself. The deaths range from fifty, sixty, to seventy a day, and even one hundred, some say—I know not if it be true—and it does not cease; nay, we now see only crosses at every door, and dead bodies. We are well here, thank God; *I have not quitted Florence, although I have sent of our Community away from the city upwards of seventy brethren.* If you hear that we are in tribulations, don't be disturbed, for God will deliver us from all our trials, and as we have been the first stricken in Italy, so shall we be the first comforted. Speak encouragingly on our part to our brothers and sisters, and all the others of our friends. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

"Frater Hieronymus Savonarola Germanus."

The tenth letter in the collection, addressed to the Cancelliere di Ercole, Duca di Ferrara—*A' Maestro Lodovico, Pittore*—dated 13th August, 1497, is still on the subject of the plague then

* Lettere Inedite di Sav. p. 127.

† The Fra Maurelio above named was the brother of Savonarola, Marco Aurelio, who received the habit at the hands of Fra Girolamo, in San Marco, the 23rd February, 1496, and was professed the 12th March, 1497. He died in Lucca, in the convent of San Romano. In the necrology of the convent, "bonis et humilis et imitator sanctitatis fratris sui."

raging in Florence. "In those times of tribulation," he says, "there has been even an augmentation of charity and fervour in relieving distress, and he has had experience of the opinions of many citizens who had in effect demonstrated their ardour for religion, by the fact of their not having withheld their substance in furnishing accommodation in their places of abode for numbers of the community, some accommodating twenty-four, others thirty, of the brethren chiefly, of the young novices, in order to separate them from this contagion, and give them the advantages of a purer air; but not in places in the vicinity of the city, because it would be rash and not doing our duty on our parts, and tempting God.

"I have remained here with the more ancient of the fathers, and we live in joy and consolation of the spirit; by the grace of God, we do not feel within us the slightest perturbation, for God is round about us, and has placed himself as a wall of defence between us and all hurt—*Dominus est in centro nostro et posuit se, pro antemurali.*

"With respect to the excommunications fulminated against us, many graver censures, it is thought, might be taken away for a consideration."*

The eleventh letter in this collection, addressed to his brother Albert, is dated the Vigil of the Assumption, 1497. Savonarola bids his brother to entertain no doubts on the score of the safety of his two brothers then in San Marco, nor on account of the persecution raised against him. The letter begins: "Most beloved brother, I am well, although we have the plague in the convent. Fra Maurelio is also well. Doubt not of us, and have no apprehension as to the things which have been told to you, for every day they invent a thousand fables. Be assured that in this persecution God will give us the victory; God is my helper, I will not fear what man can do to me. . . . .

"If Rome is against me, know that it is not contrary to me,

* It was proposed to Savonarola to pay certain debts of the Cardinal Piccolomini, in Florence, to the amount of 5000 scudi, on condition of the censures being removed, which offer Savonarola rejected.

but to Christ, and its controversy is with God. *But who shall resist him and have peace?* Doubt not that God will conquer. Have no fear for me on account of my being in Florence in the midst of the plague, for the Lord will be my succour. I remain to console the afflicted, the brethren, and also the laity. Although I have been solicited by the brethren and the community to leave Florence, and many places have been offered to me, *nevertheless, I did not wish to abandon the flock.*"*

The twelfth letter in the collection, addressed to the brethren of the Dominican convent of Bologna, is dated Christmas day, and Padre Marchese says the year was 1497, subsequently to the excommunication. This letter occupies nine pages and a half, and is more a homily than an epistle. I will merely extract a few brief detached passages, worthy of a place among the memorable sayings of the Saints.

He begins his letter to his brethren in Bologna by referring to the sanctity of the day on which he writes, the Lord's Nativity, and the jubilation expressed in the canticle of the angels, "Glory be to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good will."

"This night," he says, "thinking of you and praying for you, sinner though I am, and placing myself before God and recommending myself to Him, not only there came into my heart a great instinct to write to you, but also the thought that I should communicate to you. Therefore, glory be to God in the highest for all the gifts given to us by the Eternal Father, through the merits of the passion of our Saviour this day born, by which we have been brought out of the dark abyss of our sins and ignorance into His admirable light, in which we became acquainted with the brightness of His glory and the height of His majesty, to which we hope to attain by His grace. . . . . The peace (of which the angels sung) doubtless was given to us by our Saviour, in order that in tribulations we may not be perturbed through the love of Christ and of truth. Certain I am that our illuminations are of a celestial origin, and

* Lettere Inedite di Sav. p. 130.

proceed not from human wisdom, like the emanations of the intelligence of the lukewarm, *i tepidi*, but from that true wisdom which makes the spirit conscious of its possession, takes away carnal desires, and makes known the way of truth, and causes it to be clearly understood, that tribulations are good, useful, and necessary, in the Church of God, for many reasons. First, for the glory of God, which manifests itself in the tribulations of the just, so that by them it may be known how great is the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God. His divine power is shown in those tribulations of the just, when God makes choice of things which are weak, in order to confound those which are strong. Therefore, by the persecutions of the fishermen all over the world, and the sufferings of the martyrs, and the torments endured by young virgins, He overcame the potent tyrants of the universe and the world itself. His wisdom is also shown in this, when by his passion, which appeared so foolish to all the world, and by the sufferings of the just, He taught all men to live well, much better, unquestionably, than all the philosophers in their academic disputations, and in their books, taught their disciples.

"Secondly, tribulations are necessary to the salvation of every Christian person, as by these means men are rescued from sinful states and earthly attachments. For when beset by afflictions, seeing themselves persecuted by the world, men fly from that world and run to God as to that refuge which alone is sure for them. They are necessary also, because sorrows and trials, make men wise and prudent, more especially in divine things, since they make known how great is the goodness of God, and his providence towards his elect, when (however persecuted) he does not let them perish, but, on the contrary, wonderfully delivers them, and enables them in a wonderful manner to overcome their enemies.

"Tribulations, moreover, bring men to a perfect knowledge of themselves and of their fragility; and seeing that without God they are nothing, from humility they maintain themselves in the grace of God.

"In the third place, they are necessary to the Church for the well-being of the faithful who are to come after us; who, considering the tribulations of the just then living, when they shall have ceased (and reflecting on those previously endured likewise), will become confirmed in the faith and in good works. Thus it is the blood of the martyrs shed of old, much strengthens us in the faith. For we should not doubt, if it had not been for the purpose of thus upholding and enlightening our faith, assuredly such a multitude of men and women would not have so joyfully supported such exquisite torments in their martrydom as they endured. .....

"Tribulations of the Church, then, being so necessary to it, no one amongst us ought to wonder if, being desirous of following Christ, preaching his evangelical truth, we should suffer great contradictions and persecutions. On the contrary, it would be much to be wondered at, if in all states which are in communion with the Church, whoever has endeavoured to follow Christ had not suffered tribulations and persecutions, and if we alone should be free from them. Truly, if this were so, we should be members of the Church very different from the Head of it. But much more singular and shameful it would be, if the least member should be so delicate, as to expect to be exempt from suffering, and the rest of the body afflicted and sorely grieved. . . . .

[He then exhorts the brethren to purity of life and manners.]

"Miracles, without a good life, would be worth little against the adversaries of Christ, but this, (example of holiness of living), even without miracles, is very potent to confound and overcome his enemies. On which account it is, we perceive, that when the perverse seek to bring the good into contempt, they astutely try to attach infamy to them, and to charge them with some transgression, *for goodness is of such power in itself, that even bad men have not the audacity to combat it openly, but they endeavour to affix some stain upon it, in order that, with less shame to themselves, they may be able to extinguish it.* And this is the manner the Scribes and Pharisees acted with our

blessed Lord; to be enabled to kill the Christ, they studied to find in him some sin. But truth is of such a nature, that the more it is battled with, the more clearly it makes itself manifest and the more potent it becomes; while iniquity, by contradictions and contests, becomes debilitated. And, therefore, do not fear, my beloved, that the word of God will fall to the ground, but the carnal and animal men will be brought to the dust. . . .

"If our adversaries then should proceed to the last extremities against us, our course should be neither to seek to persecute nor to disturb them. In times of tranquillity, virtue has a tendency to decline, and in time of battle it becomes perfect. The tyrants of old were the occasion of the martyrs becoming more perfect, as it was made manifest to all the world. And those who fell into false doctrine, were the occasion of the holy doctors of the Church better understanding and expounding the Sacred Scriptures. . . . .

"But, above all things, keep yourselves from the adulation of the tepid and indifferent, who know not the ways of truth, and confide, and make others confide, in exterior works and ceremonies, *opere e ceremonie exteriori*, and who, within, have no charity, nor humility, nor any virtue. They commend poverty with their lips, but they are not willing to suffer the least offence; and they are greedy of the goods of this world, more than all people belonging to it. They are without pity or compassion, covetous of glory and inimical to truth, like unto a sepulchre, beautiful without, and full of all filthiness within. They make on us perpetual war, because we have discovered a great part of their vices, in order that the simple might no longer be deceived, and by their falsity be brought to eternal ruin. . . . .

"Fear not, oh lovers of Christ, the tribulations which have to come on the earth, especially on Italy. Even exult that the time of your redemption is drawing nigh."*

Will the readers of these passages concur in the opinion that

* Lettere Inedite di Sav. p. 132.

forces itself on the author; namely, that the mission of the man by whom this letter was written could only be from God?

There are two other very brief and quite unimportant letters in this collection of the *Lettere Inedite* of Savonarola, for which we are indebted to the researches of Padre Marchese; and now, for the first time, introduced into a biography of Fra Girolamo.

CHAPTER XIV.

OPPOSITION TO SAVONAROLA OF SOME OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS, AND OF THE FRANCISCANS ESPECIALLY, AND THEIR ADHERENTS THE PALLESCHI.—FRA GIROLAMO AND THE USURERS OF FLORENCE.—THE ANTAGONISM OF SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES AND SORDID INTERESTS.—1495 TO 1496.

"My soul is full of the mocking of the wealthy and the despitefulness of the proud."—*Ps.* cxxiii.

"The just man is above the world, and superior to all events; he commences in the present life to reign with Christ; all creatures are subject to him, and he is subject to God alone." MASSILLON'S *Sermons.*

"Ye merchants! leave off usury—give back what you have unjustly gained, but of your superfluity give to the poor." *Sermon of Savon.*

NARDI, in the second book of his Florentine History, referring to the affairs of Florence, in 1495, after the departure of the French, says, the machinations of the adversaries of Fra Girolamo were not without the instigation "of some persons of religious orders."*

Those machinations found agents to accomplish the objects of the Palleschi in Rome.

The Florentine envoy at the Court of Rome wrote to the Signoria, the 5th of April, 1496, that there had been recently held a consultation with fourteen Dominican Masters in Theology, on the subject of Fra Girolamo's affairs. All the theologians, with one exception, protested against Fra Girolamo; the one who opposed the violent measures recommended against their brother, Fra Girolamo, was a young member of the order, "who defended the cause of Savonarola with a high hand."

* Nardi, Hist. Fior. p. 32.

Burlamacchi relates, "That on one occasion, after Fra Girolamo's return from Bologna, some people, who seem to have represented the monied interest, had a discussion in the palace of the Medici, when the advisability of the expulsion of Fra Girolamo from the city was taken into consideration. Some said they ought to do with Fra Girolamo as they had done with Fra Bernardino da Monte Feltro."

"This holy man," continues Burlamacchi, "had preached in Florence with much fruit, and afterwards he was expelled publicly for preaching against usury, and wishing to introduce and to found the charitable institutions of Monte della Pieta. At this discussion, Fra Angelo Carducci, a Franciscan, was present, and being ordered to report it to Fra Girolamo, the latter replied,—'Know that I will remain in Florence longer than Lorenzo; for Lorenzo de Medici will die this year (1492), and also the Pope Innocent the Eighth. The end of his son, Pietro, I wish not to speak of, because it would be a scandal.' These things all happened which he spoke of, for the Pope died in this year, and also Lorenzo."*

Towards the end of December, 1495, there came to Florence a Franciscan friar named Zoccoli, sent, as he said, by the Duke of Milan, to express his disapproval of Fra Girolamo's proceedings as a preacher. This Franciscan began to oppose Fra Girolamo very vehemently. Finding, however, that he made no impression whatever on the public mind against Fra Girolamo, he took his departure.

The friars of several other orders took similar steps, and they gained nothing by their attempts but confusion.

A certain monk of Vallambrosa, named Agnolo, also at this time denounced a letter of the fathers; but the denunciation produced no good effect.

A nun also at this time, who lived in a convent far from Florence, was desirous to enter into theological discussion with Fra Girolamo; "but the father, in reply, desired she might be requested to attend to her spinning, and apply herself to the performance of a woman's duties."

* Burlamacchi, Vita de Sav. p. 537.

Many also, and very formidable, were the persecutions which he endured at the hands of the Tepidi. But the good father stood like a rock in the midst of contentious billows, encountering unmoved all their fury. His reputation maintained its ground in the midst of persecution and calumny. The wise and good were his friends, with few exceptions.

In 1495 and 1496 the opposition to Fra Girolamo went on gradually augmenting; in 1497 it became a deadly animosity which could hardly be controlled by the government, and towards the close of that year some of the authorities gave an official countenance to it. The same adversaries he had from the beginning were still his foes; the dissolute, the impious, the avaricious, and the despotic. Not only were various attempts made against his life, but a constant system of annoyances and vexatious insults was adopted by his opponents, of the most unworthy as well as unmanly character.

On one occasion, they had formed a plan for setting fire to the pulpit while the father was preaching: at another time they procured that rare object in nature, a dead ass; stuffed the skin, and set it up in the pulpit, a short time before Fra Girolamo was expected to ascend the steps. On another occasion of particular solemnity also, when he was to preach, they fixed sharp nails in the cushion along the edge of the pulpit, with the points projecting upwards, so that when the preacher used any vehemence of action by striking his hands on the cushions, he was sure to inflict a severe wound on himself.

More than once his life had been attempted on his way to the churches in which he preached, and even in the church itself. On one of those occasions, the women who were favourably disposed to him, cried out those words, that had so thrilling an effect at the commencement of the reform, "Viva Jesus Christo Nostro Re! Viva Jesu Christo Re de Firenza!" The men on both sides—those who were admirers of Fra Girolamo, and those who belonged to the ribald, godless class of religion-hating ruffians—drew their swords, and menaced one another's life. Verily the reformed republic with its great council, and the spi-

ritual regime superseding the authority of the police, the rule of liberty and equality in all their fulness under the new theocracy did not practically work well.

The money dealers and usurers of all grades, from the private Lombard lenders on pledges, to the great bankers, who turned their official influence in the state to the account of their private advantages, began to find their interests and those which Fra Girolamo espoused and advocated, were at variance.

The conflict was carried on for some time, principally in discussions on general subjects of complaint against the friar in the houses of those opposed to Fra Girolamo, on account of his mode of preaching, or who were the adherents of the Medici.

The worshippers of Mammon, in their efforts to discredit him, took care to keep out of sight their own particular reasons for opposition to him.

That old policy of theirs was pursued which has prevailed in all ages and phases of civilization, and which has all the energy and recuperancy of youth in its old pliant, never-failing craft and cunning of making, the sordid interests of avarice seem to men identified with the interests of order, morality, and religion; and both secured by that union of force and influence which is essential to the maintenance of its power.

Calvin, in one of his letters, discusses the question, "How far it is consistent with morality to accept of interest for a pecuniary loan?" He opposes the opinions of Aristotle and of some Catholic theologians, by shewing that the Mosaic law on this point was not a moral, but a municipal prohibition, that was not to be judged of upon the principles of natural equity.

Lending houses, somewhat on the principle of Loan Fund Societies, called "Bancos dei Poveri," and also Monte di Pietè, had been established in Italy so early as 1464, by the Franciscans. Some Dominicans opposed them, "ab initio," as tending to promote usury, though nominally established to advance loans to the poor free of interest. In 1464, the Franciscans obtained a papal sanction for them.

There was one of these institutions established at Orvieto, under Paul the Second; another at Viterbo, under Sixtus the Fourth; and one also, by a special bull of this pontiff, at Savona, his birth-place.

Devote, in his "Institutiones Cononicæ" (tom. ii. p. 361) says, the first Monte di Pieta was established by Cardinal Cameraria, of Ostia, under the name of Monte Christo, and was confirmed by a brief of Pius the Second, in 1463. About the same time, a Monte was established in Perugia, which Paul the Second confirmed in 1467.

Tiraboschi, referring to some controversies of 1476, says, "Another question was concerning Monte di Pieta, about this time instituted by Saint Bernardino de Feltre, of the Franciscan order. Although Paul the Second, Sixtus the Fourth, and Innocent the Eighth, by their bulls, had authorised and praised them, some theologians, however, and canonists considered they were illicit, and involved the crime of usury. Whence disputes and published controversies on one side and another prevailed, and a collection of these were printed in Cremona, in 1496. There we find, first of all, a treatise in defence of the Monte di Pietè, by the famous Joannis Nanni, or Annius de Viterbo,* and several other theologians, and with two briefs of Innocent the Eighth in their favour, and one piece opposed to them by an Augustinian friar, Nicolo Bariani."†

In the time of Savonarola, the Lombard money jobbers and the Jews were the pawnbrokers and money-lenders of Italy.

* Annio de Viterbo, the Dominican, was a very celebrated literary impostor, whose fabrications and falsifications of history, and pretended discoveries of several books of the lost works of Berosus and Manethon, have greatly contributed to corrupt a very large portion of Spanish history and the chronicles compiled in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and unfortunately not only of the time of Annio, but long subsequent to it. Annius published his spurious Chaldean histories in folio, in 1498, entitled "Antiquities," in Rome, where he died in 1502, at the age of seventy, in high estimation with the Pope, "Alexandre VI. que en faisait beaucoup de cas," says the Abbé Feller, speaking, as he imagines, in praise of the Dominican.

† Hist. de Let. Ital. tom vi. p. 300.

They managed, whenever they established themselves, to secure the protection of persons in authority, either spiritual or temporal, and, if possible, of both. There were few governments of which they possessed not the influence of some members; and it was the same with the religious orders.

The Lombards had Monte della Pieta institutions in Florence, which had been perverted from their original objects, and made subservient to the interests of numerous capitalists only.

These usurious institutions were strenuously and successfully opposed by Savonarola.

His warfare with the Lombards led him into hostility with the Franciscans, who were supposed to be favourable to his opponents and their interests. And this quarrel throws no little light on the rancorous opposition to Savonarola's missionary labours, on the part of the members of the Franciscan order.*

In opposition to the Lombard lending houses, Savonarola caused two charitable Montes de Piete, on the old system of Bernardo de Feltre, to be established. The decree of the republic, in approval of these institutions, of 1497, is cited by Marchese.

Muriani states, in his History of the Council of Trent, that the Jews had offered the republic 20,000 florins to prevent the establishment of Monte di Pieta in Florence.

The decision of Leo the Tenth permitted the exaction of interest on loans, but only sufficient to defray the expense of management.†

Mention is made of the establishment of "Sagro Monte della Pieta" in Rome, in the "Descrizione de Roma Antica e moderna," as having taken place in 1539, the founder being the general of the Franciscan order, Fra Giovanni Calvo. This father, having observed that the extreme misery of the poor was aggravated by the usurious interest which they were charged with by the Jews, with whom they were in the habit of pledging their clothing, or had the necessity of selling whatever belonged

* After Savonarola's death, the Franciscans obtained a bull from Leo the Tenth declaring lending houses legal and useful, and those who opposed them subject to censure.

† Mastrofini Sopra Usuria.

to them for the merest trifle, when they were in urgent necessity, obtained from Paul the Third his sanction for the establishment of a confraternity of many wealthy people, who, without interest, advanced to the needy sums of money on pledges not exceeding thirty scudi. On repayment, the borrowers received back their pledged apparel or goods within a term of eighteen months. But if not redeemed within that period, they were sold publicly by auction; and if there was any surplus from the produce of the sale, after reimbursing the bank for the money lent, that amount, whatever it might be, was returned to the borrower.

But for sums lent on pledges to an amount exceeding thirty scudi, two per cent. a year was charged for the use of it.*

Of this institution in Rome, St. Carlo Boromeo being the protector, he drew up several rules and regulations for its government, and the Pope, Sixtus the Fifth, bestowed on it a sum of 7,000 scudi, with which they purchased a suitable edifice, and in the pontificate of Clement the Seventh, another in 1604 (the present establishment), with which was combined a bank for deposits, the whole governed by a confraternity of Cavaliers.†

* Those who would consult the best authority on the subject of the money-lending and banking institutions generally of Italy, especially in the middle ages, have only to refer to the learned work of the Abbate Mastrofini sopra l'Usuria.

† Roma Antica e Moderna, tome i. p. 597. 12mo. *Roma*, 1750.

CHAPTER XV.

ON THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS.

"Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God."
1 JOHN, iv. 1.

"Savonarola, on account of the prophetic spirit with which he was inspired, began to enunciate some mysteries about an impending destruction, although he concealed them under the cover of sacred Scripture, that impure men might be prevented from perceiving them, fearing lest the holy thing should be given to the dogs, and meantime be rendered absurd by visions that were still doubtful. This, Savonarola told to me in private; but in public he very frequently said that all he had preached concerning futurity, he apprehended by a positive infusion of Divine light to be true, just in the same way as any person of sound mind knew that every part is less than the whole."—P. PICO DE MIRANDOLA, *in Vit. Sav.*

THE question of Savonarola's sincerity and sanctity is one which has been repeatedly asked and replied to, and yet the latest of his biographers makes the same inquiry as the first, and people still desire to be informed whether the monk of Ferrara was a fanatic, an impostor, a frenzied, or a wise and a holy man, pure of heart, single-minded, sound in faith and doctrine—a spiritualized, contemplative, ardent follower of Christ crucified, eminently pious and prayerful, and largely endowed with spiritual gifts and privileges? Others inquire, was Savonarola a true prophet?—was his an extraordinary mission direct from God, for some special purpose? Were his revelations derived from heaven?

Those persons will never satisfactorily answer the question, who, like Bayle, dispose of this inquiry boldly and compendiously, on the supposed simple merits of the case, and the bearing on them of certain laws of nature as they are inter-

preted by them, and restricted in their operation within limits which they undertake to prescribe for them. It will not do to ignore all the circumstances which contribute to the exaltation of minds wholly devoted to religion, all the influences which flow from contemplative piety, all the favours from God which are bestowed on devotion, fervent and triumphant over self, and all external objects which absorb the senses, and in its highest degree of intensity wraps the soul in that state of ecstasy in which glimpses of the spiritual world are said to be enjoyed by contemplative persons of eminent sanctity and purity. The nature of those circumstances, influences, favours, and spiritualizing effects ascribed to mental prayer, cannot be disposed of with a sneer; the evidence on which they rest, in numerous instances, is of a kind that demands the most patient and sober inquiry that can be given to the subject.

Humboldt, in his "Cosmos," page 124, says: "A presumptuous scepticism, which rejects facts without examination of their truth, is in some respects even more injurious than an unquestioning credulity."

Those persons who have little faith in those peculiar spiritual gifts which I have referred to, are not justified still as treating as impostors numbers of holy persons in ancient times, who believed that such privileges had been bestowed on them.

The amiable and philosophic mind of Sir James Mackintosh revolted at the representations made by modern writers, professing to be of evangelical dispositions, of the piety of ancient times, even in the exuberance of its zeal and exaltation, as a pretence or an imposture, a cover for fraudulent contrivances and cunningly-devised fictions.

"The illusions of sight, the shades by which dreams sometimes fade into waking visions, the disturbance of the frame from long abstinence, and from the stimulants incautiously taken to relieve it, together with a permanent state of mental excitement, sanctioned by the firm faith which then prevailed in the frequent and ascertainable interpositions of Divine power, are sufficient to relieve us from the necessity of loading the teachers

of our forefathers with a large share of fraudulent contrivance and unmingled fiction. The progress of a tale of wonder, especially when aided by time or distance, from the smallest beginning to a stupendous prodigy, is too generally known to be more particularly called in aid of an attempt to enforce the reasonableness of dealing charitably, not to say justly, with the memory of those who diffused Christianity among ferocious barbarians."*

Mental prayer, or contemplative piety, in its highest degree of spirituality, is said to be productive of peculiar enlightenment. That kind of illumination and state of mind which those versed in mystic theology mean by the term ecstatic, we must endeavour to comprehend, if we would be qualified to form a judgment of Savonarola's claim to spiritual gifts and graces, as manifested in his visions and revelations.

Perhaps the knowledge that I speak of may not tend towards the establishment of those high pretensions of Savonarola's advocates to the character they claim for him, of a prophet, in the ordinary acceptation of that appellation. Perhaps that knowledge may lead to the conclusion that men eminently pious and wholly separated from worldly things, who have subdued their passions, and given their hearts entirely to God, may become more spiritualized beings, even in the flesh, than other men who are less pure and holy; and that Savonarola had some claims to be considered as one of that favoured class, one who, from his youth to his dying day, had communed with God in prayer, and was spiritually benefited by that communion.

We may obtain the kind of knowledge I refer to, by making ourselves acquainted with the revelations of a person of Savonarola's Church, who was held by it to have lived and died in the odour of sanctity, and who is believed to have been endowed with supernatural gifts, and special privileges of a spiritual kind. St. Teresa is accounted by the Church to have been one of its children thus gifted, and privileged to a wonderful extent: and

* History of England, vol. i. p. 55.

in the science and mystery of mental prayer, to have been unsurpassed in knowledge and experience.

A faithful, but necessarily a very compendious account of the spiritual career of St. Teresa, will not be misplaced then in this chapter. But previously a few words may be said respecting the several modes in which divine revelations are stated to have been made to various persons of holy lives and doctrines.

Glanville, in his treatise on "The Progress and Advancement of Knowledge," (*Lon.* 1668, p. 100,) observes, that the Holy Oracles of God were communicated ordinarily to the imagination of the Prophets. That God was pleased in those inspirations to apply himself much to the imagination of the Prophets.

In support of which opinion, he remarks, "That both the schoolmen and others usually divide prophecy into intellectual and imaginary (query imaginative?). The former is from a light immediately infused into the understanding, the latter (is understood), when the prophetic spirit makes its first impressions on the imagination by sensible and material representation.

"As for the first, it was so rare, that not above one or two instances are produced by the learned of this kind, viz. of *Moses and St. Paul.* Now, commonly the Mosaical inspiration was distinguished from the prophetical, and the difference is plainly enough expressed in Deuteronomy xxxiv. 10. 'And there arose not a Prophet like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.' For the other Prophets, God saith, 'I will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream; my servant Moses is not so, with him will I speak mouth to mouth,' Numbers xxii. 6. Thus was intimated a transcendent privilege to Moses above the Prophets, in the immediate way of application to his mind without the mediation of sensible impressions. And upon this account, it is said in the New Testament, 'They have *Moses* and *the Prophets;*' implying the difference of the dignity and degree of their inspiration."*

The second instance adduced by Glanville, of immediate intel-

* Glanville's Plus Ultra, &c. p. 132.

lectual inspiration, is the rapture of St. Paul, referred to in 2 Cor. xii. 2, and belongs rather to ecstasy than prophetic revelation.

The rarity of this immediate communication of the divine spirit to the understanding, is no less evident than the frequency of the ordinary influx of inspiration, in the latter days of prophesy, particularly made known to the senses immediately by the imagination, as the Scripture tells us it should be. "And I will make myself known to him in a vision, and speak unto him in a dream."

In this way, prophetic illumination takes the language of similitudes, allegories, and parables. We find instances of this in Jeremiah's basket of figs, the boiling pot, the rod, in Daniel's tree and the four beasts, in Ezekiel's fiery chariot, in St. John's living creatures let down from heaven, &c.

These objects commentators are agreed were not entities, but representations of such, miraculously made on the imagination. Cornelius à Lapide lays it down as a general rule:—"Prophetarum visiones et revelationes communiter fuerunt sensiles sive imaginaria."

Glanville cites Rabbi Albo's opinion, "that prophesy was an influence from God, upon the mind, by the mediation of the phantasy;" and likewise cites the opinions of Maimonides.

"That all the degrees of prophesy are contained in those two (modes of inspiration), a dream and a vision." And Joel, he reminds us, c. ii. v. 28, mentions these as comprehending all degrees of prophesy.

"This only remains to notice," says Glanville, "that it was the general belief of the Jewish writers, and of the Christian fathers and schoolmen, universally confirmed by the authority of Scripture, that angels were ordinarily the efficients (agents), by whose ministry the scene of prophetic representation was disposed and ordered," (page 135).

They are the internuncii, the agents, whose power of preventing the prophetic aspects of divine thoughts is limited to the imagination, as Maimonides affirms by divers ways, all which he calls "Gradus Imaginarii," in contradistinction to

the Gradus Mosaicus, which is the intellectual mode of inspiration proceeding directly from the Deity, to the spirit of man.

Neander, a Protestant writer of celebrity, in his life of St. Bernard, in reference to the visions and revelations ascribed to the Abbess Hildegard, observes—"The soul being in connexion with two worlds, the one the seat of its shrouded head hidden from our sight, but to which by its real nature it belongs; the other foreign to its proper nature, but in which it is now embodied, and according to the laws of which it effects its development, and attains to the consciousness of itself; it is therefore natural that it should receive the influences of both worlds, and where its relations to both have not been harmoniously cultivated in accordance with the law of its temporal development, that these influences should be easily confounded, and should mutually cloud and perplex each other. The sense for the spiritual perception of the world beyond the ken of the senses exists only as a spiritual sense, which may predominate over the other faculties of the soul, so as to become overwhelmed, and this experience teaches.

"At various periods there have been men in whom the sense has manifested itself independently of all cultivation, and who, although unacquainted with human teachers, have had many glimpses of the higher world, to which others have been only able to attain by patient reflection in the common mode of human education. But from the want of the regular and harmonious cultivation of the spiritual powers, it frequently and easily happens that such men confound in a singular manner feelings and objects of sense with those revelations of the higher world; that from being incapable of any careful and reflective self knowledge, they regard many things as supernatural, which have in fact had their origin immediately in the influence of the inferior powers of the soul."*

Gerson, the celebrated Chancellor of Paris, and erudite theologian, composed his treatise on the Examination of Spirits, "De

* The Life and Times of St. Bernard by Dr. Augustus Neander, translated from the German by Miss Wrench, p. 230, 12mo. *London*, 1843.

Probatione Spirituum,"* during the sitting of the council of Constance, on the occasion of an application being made to the church of Rome by the Swedish sovereign for the beatification of three persons of great sanctity, which application was disposed of after some investigation in the council. Gerson was one of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the nature of the spiritual gifts and graces of the persons whose canonization was applied for.

His treatise on the "Discernment of Spirits" holds the highest rank in theological literature devoted to this inquiry.

In this treatise, Gerson establishes three tests whereby Spirits may be known, and true visions discerned from false ones. The first test is Sacred Scripture, well understood. The second is experience and peculiar power of perception, which he calls *La manne cachèe, et le Caillou blanc*,—hidden manna, and the white stone, wherein there is a new name written that no one knows except he who has received it. The third is actual knowledge by revelations, or the gift of discernment of Spirits, which, according to Gerson, is a privilege accorded to Apostles and the Hierarchial Order. But it is evident that Gerson does not place unlimited confidence in the two last ways, namely, by experience and revelation, with the possession of which every body might flatter himself.

He returns to the Holy Scriptures, and says there are still many reflections to make with respect to the persons who have visions: the nature of those visions even, the foundation on which they rest, and all particulars respecting the persons to whom they were first disclosed, the manner of their coming, and the sources from which they arise. "With regard to the persons alleging to have visions," Gerson directs "a strict examination of their conduct, to ascertain if they have good sense, if they are free from frenzy, or any melancholy ailment, or if they are exempt from all violent passions, such as anger, jealousy, love, or even zeal for some new devotion."

* Op. Ger. tom. i. p. 43, 44.

He thinks also, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the way that the person has been brought up or reared, with whom associated, his ruling passions, and finally whether rich or poor.

"*If the person* (says Gerson) *be rich, we may fear that pride, which may be called after St. Bernard 'un mal fort subtil,' may enter into the matter, and the more so because it is born sometimes in the bosom of humility, and is developed under the hair shirt and in penance, though it appears quite opposed to pride.*

"*But, on the contrary, if the person is poor, as necessity is a bad councillor, it happens only too often that it has recourse to lies and imposture to derive advantage from it.*"*

With respect to the subject of visions, Gerson judiciously observes:—

"*First of all, strict examination must be made if every thing that is reported, be true. It is a very common artifice with impostors to make use of several truths as a veil, to cause a single lie to pass current (under that covering). And it is for that reason that the Lord Jesus Christ forbade the possessed, as St. Paul did the Pythoness, to give evidence to the truth. ..... Moreover it must be observed, if there be in the visions (which are reported to us) the character of that true wisdom that comes from on high, of which St. James has given us an idea in the Epistle iii. v.* 17. *Finally, we ought to pay attention to the matter of those visions. Either they contain nothing but what is already taught in the Scriptures, or by the light of common sense, or they contain some things that are different. If they include things that differ (from those that are taught by Scripture, or known by reason), then they ought to be held in suspicion: because we are bound to stand fast by the law and the prophets.*

"*If visions include nothing that has not been already known to us by Scripture and right reason, such visions and revelations are of no use, since we have already a revelation by which we must stand. Otherwise it would depend on the phantasy of each individual, to heap visions on visions, which we should be called on to*

* Ger. ubi sup. p. 40.

believe, as if they proceeded from God; and thus, the Christian religion, which, according to St. Augustin, consists of a few articles, would become without comparison more burthensome than the Mosaic Law itself."*

He then proceeds to treat of those pretended Illuminati who impart their revelations to others, and on this point he gives most excellent advice. He recommends that the motives should be inquired into, which might have induced those illuminati to impart their revelations, that they should not be encouraged by approbation, as commonly is done, but, on the contrary, that it should be represented to them that it is not becoming they should pretend to be more sage than the rest of mankind, who conduct themselves in matters relating to salvation by the lights of the Holy Scriptures, and of common sense. And the examples of a vast number of Saints are to be borne in mind, shewing how those pretended visions have been resisted, as temptations of the Holy Spirit. Finally, he represents in strong terms of reproval, the abuses which a spirit of fanaticism had introduced into religion.

"*It is difficult to understand* (says Gerson) *what large numbers of people have been seduced and turned away from the true religion, by this spirit of curiosity, in regard to visions and miracles. From this source have we so many popular superstitions which infect the Christian religion. People run after miracles as the Jews sought after signs. The worship of Latria is rendered to images, and more faith is put in Saints, who have not been even canonized, and in writings without legitimate authority, than in true Saints and in the Gospel.*"

Gerson next directs particular attention to be paid to the precise objects which those persons seemed to have in view, who profess to have had supernatural communications with Heaven.

"*Not only* (observes Gerson) *the object the most proximate and apparent must be enquired into, but, as much as possible, the most remote and secret, because it often happens that actions which seem to have an edifying and holy aim, come to a bad and scandulous*

* Gerson, ubi supra, p. 41. ap l'Enfant.

issue, whether it be that the result does not correspond with the beginning or that bad designs were concealed under the appearances of piety."

Numerous other observations of a like evangelical character, are to be found in this treatise.

There is one point particularly deserving of attention in the observations of Gerson. Above all things, he says, the nature of spirits is to be discerned, by the fact of the alleged communications with them being productive of pride, or tending to advancement in humility; as true visions tend to humiliation, and false ones to pride. "Si unum hoc humilitatis signum bene excuteretur et pateret, alias inquirere notas necesse non foret. Nam ex humilitate et superbia in rebus Spiritus facillimé quis discat quænam veræ sint et quænam falsitate oleant."*

One of his concluding observations is also deserving of much attention. He says, "those who have recourse to visions, even with good intentions towards the interests of morals, or the doctrines of the church, ought to think that it is rather to tempt God, than to honour him, to imagine his designs are to be promoted in this manner, as if He had not provided for all that is necessary for faith and morals by the Holy Scriptures, and by the ordinary operations of his divine providence."

Finally, he observes, and the observation he makes is one in which the highest wisdom is united with the most truly Christian humility of spirit:—"People should distrust exceedingly visions which they may imagine they have, and those which others boast to them of having, knowing well by experience which he has had himself, how much there is of illusion to be feared, and of imposture likewise in such visions."*

Gerson's admirable treatise had the effect on the Council in relation to the proposed canonization of three Swedish Saints, of a modern motion in Parliament to read a bill that day six months, thereby to bury the proposed measure with all decorum; or of an

* De Probatione Spirituum, cap. xx.

† De Probatione Spirituum, ap. Gers. tome i. pp. 37 and 43, ap. Hist. du Con. de Const. tom. i. pp. 447 and 450.

ancient procedure to postpone an undesirable event to the period of the Greek Calends. The canonization was postponed by a special bull of the Council to a future time for consideration, in order to give time to the Swedish Bishops to make a more exact report on the several cases for submission to a future Pope.

Catholics who take exception to the visions and revelations of Savonarola, on the ground of their appearing to many unnecessary, irreconcileable with our notions of the dignity of the Deity, not absolutely essential to the interests of religion, being evidential of pride or fanaticism, or credulity, should bear in mind that on similar grounds exception had been taken to the revelations and raptures of St. Teresa, prior to her canonization. Yet Bishop Milner says of her productions—"There have been no writings, perhaps, that have been more pointedly or more strongly approved of by this unerring judgment, than those of St. Teresa. Her spirit of prayer, and the character of her ascetical works, were not only examined and approved of by the most eminent divines of her age, but also by a constellation of her holy contemporaries, such as St. F. Borgia, St. Peter of Alcantara, and St. John of the Cross, who were the best, because they were experimental judges of the excellency of her '*heavenly doctrine*,' as it is styled by the church in the prayer inserted in her public liturgy."*

Yet, in her revelations, we meet with many accounts of her communications with the spiritual world, of interviews and discourses with the Deity, of mysterious colloquies in the inmost sanctuary, and of unutterable things too—"Arcana verba quæ non licet homini loqui"—far more wonderful and startling to credibility than any to be met with in the works of Savonarola.

Cardinal Bona, speaking of the visions and revelations of St. Teresa, said: "She never desired any visions or raptures.

"She besought God to lead her to him by the common beaten path of duty and submission to his will.

"When her mental prayer became eminently spiritualized,

* Preface to the Translation of her "Exclamations," &c. *London*, 1790.

and visions, raptures, and marvellous revelations were frequently experienced by her, she advanced the more in love and humility. Those from whom she sustained great persecution, she loved and prayed for most assiduously.

"An internal peace reigned in her soul that no worldly quiet or repose could simulate.

"Her zeal for the salvation of souls was most ardent, and her desire to be perfect most fervent.

"Those who conversed with her were struck with the spirit of holiness, humility, and modesty that breathed in all her thoughts, words, looks, and actions.

"Her visions generally followed long and fervent prayer and approach to the sacrament of the Eucharist."

There is no "imitation of the oracular voice of the obscure Sphinx"* in those outpourings of ecstatic piety of St. Teresa; no affectation of excitement or enthusiasm wrought up to a high pitch of fury. The words she breathes in her raptures are not like those the Sibyl utters, dread oracles of dubious import, which she sends forth from the cavern, blending truth with obscurity: . . . . .

> "Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumæ à Sibylla,
> Horrendas canit ambages antrosque remugit,
> *Obscuris vera involvens.*"†

St. Teresa was born in 1515. She was sent to a convent for educational purposes at the age of about fourteen, and was frequently obliged to return home on account of severe illnesses, principally affecting the nervous system. She entered on religious life at the age of twenty. By the instructions of her director, she commenced an account of her career and spiritual experience in the year 1681, when she was in her forty-seventh year.‡

In 1564, she wrote a spiritual work, entitled "The Way of Perfection."

* Lycophron Cassandra, v. 7. † Virg. Æn. 6.

‡ The original MS. is deposited in the Escurial.—The Interior Castle, &c. translated by the Rev. John Dallon, 8vo. *Lon.* 1852.

In 1574, she wrote another work, the history of "The Foundations" of her convents. At a later period, she wrote several treatises, instructions chiefly, and an exposition of the book of Canticles, of which only a small portion remains.

When the saint was in her sixty-second year, in 1576, she commenced the work which she has entitled "*Castillo Interior O Las Moradas*"—the Interior Castle, or the Mansions.

This work is esteemed by eminent theological writers as "her greatest and most sublime production."

Nevertheless, it was written under the most unfavourable circumstances, in regard to health and composure of mind. In the preface to this work, she says the writing of it has been of the greatest difficulty to her; first, because she did not feel a spirit nor a desire to write it; secondly, "because she had had, for the last three months, such a noise in her head, that she wrote with pain even on necessary business."

Again, in the first chapter of the fourth mansion, she complains—"While I am writing these words, and considering the great noise which, as I said in the beginning, runs in my head, so that I consider it almost impossible to finish what I am commanded to write, methinks there are within it many vast rivers, and on the other side of these waters, that several little birds were chirping. This noise is not in my ears, but in the top of my head, where they say the superior part of the soul resides."

"In this work the Saint conducts a soul from the first elements of prayer by steps as it were to the seventh mansion, the palace of the heavenly spouse, the king of glory. She teaches, that without the gift of prayer a soul is like a paralytic, without the use of his limbs: mental prayer is the gate by which she enters into herself, and learns first to know herself and the riches of grace to which she ought to aspire; so that the knowledge of her own miseries, which is the foundation of humility, and the knowledge of God, are the first step or mansion. In the three following mansions the Saint explains the states of interior conflicts, and spiritual dryness and desolation, with intervals of heavenly sweetness in prayer, till the soul arrives at the prayer

of QUIET. In the fourth mansion (chap. iii.) she teaches that Quiet or Recollection, in which the soul remains inactive and without sentiments of God, is an illusion, and to be shunned: for in all supernatural prayer the soul is active and vigorous, and has lively sentiments of God. This remark is a pre-condemnation of the fanaticism of the Quietists. The fifth mansion she calls the prayer of UNION, which produces in the soul an ardent desire speedily to enjoy God, which only his will that she should still remain in this exile, can mitigate. In the sixth mansion are explained the grievous interior pains, and also the raptures and visions which sometimes befall a soul in this habitual state. The seventh mansion is a higher degree of the prayer of UNION, in which a soul (not by intuitive vision, which is the beatitude of heaven, but by an intellectual vision with created species or images) receives a kind of distinct knowledge of the Trinity and other high mysteries in a clear light, and with a supreme degree of delight and jubilation. In this state the soul feels no intervals of interior pains, but enjoys an habitual jubilation and feast, though such elevations only happen as the Holy Ghost is pleased to favour a soul with them in prayer. There is no state in which a soul may not forfeit the divine grace by falling into sin, nor is the most sublime prayer of Union an absolute assurance that a soul is even then in the state of grace."*

Describing the state of her soul, with regard to her manner of prayer, she says, "She began to consider Christ as present in her soul, in the same manner as she had been accustomed to do after communion." Thus she entertained herself with Him in her ordinary actions and in mental prayer.

From the twentieth year after she had first applied herself to this exercise, she made little use of argument to inflame her affections. The intuitive perception of aught that was Divine in any subject of meditation, immediately produced in her heart the most ardent act of Divine love. The tenderness of her love, and her feeling sense of her own wants, enabled her to pray without studied or chosen words, or long reasoning and reflection in meditation.

* Butler's Life, p. 97.

St. Teresa says she had been accustomed to feel at particular times a tender heavenly sweetness in her devotions, but at this time her soul began to be frequently raised by God in the sublime degrees of supernatural passive prayer. For she observes, that the servants of God arrive not suddenly at the highest region of spirituality in prayer, but advance slowly and steadily in the paths of perfection.

St. Teresa distinguishes four degrees in mental prayer. In the first, the soul applies herself to holy meditation, for which a calm state of mind, and a retired place, are necessary, and the life of Christ one of the first and most-important subjects. No state of dryness or difficulties must make a person lay it aside; he is not to seek his own satisfaction, but ought to be content with humbling himself before God, and knowing that his Divine Majesty regards the desire of our hearts to love Him, and knows and compassionates our miseries and weakness more than we ourselves can do. We must be willing to bear our cross, to suffer and to receive; and the Saint says she afterwards experienced that one hour of consolation abundantly paid, even in this life, for all the crosses she had suffered.

St. Teresa assigns the second degree of prayer to be that of *Quiet*, in which the powers of the soul are recollected, but not absorbed in God, the will or affections being strongly captivated in God, and employed in acts of love, and the understanding and memory aiding some little the will to enjoy this its sovereign good and quiet, though the will is so taken up in God as not to regard or be distracted by the concurrence of these powers. This state is accompanied with an exceeding great interior comfort or delight, the powers of the soul are applied without labour or pains (so that this prayer never wearies, how long soever it continues), and often tears flow with joy, of their own accord, or without being procured. The intellect here may suggest certain humble silent reflections of thanksgiving, love or the like, which increase the flame of the will; but if the intellect raises too great a tumult, or the will strives to silence or recollect it, or the memory or imagination, this quiet

is lost, and vanishes. This recollection or quiet in the exercise of Divine love, inspired and produced by the spirit of God, differs infinitely from a pretended quiet of the will, which human industry may try to produce in it, but which is without any effect or sublime operation; it quickly expires, and is succeeded by great dryness in the affections.

The third degree of prayer she calls the repose of the soul: it is the prayer of *Union*, in which the soul overflows with incomparably greater joy, ardour and delight in the Divine love than in the former; she consumes herself in the most sublime affections of love and praise, as St. Teresa explains at large, and is not inactive, as the false mystics or Quietists pretended, though she knows not at all how she acts. The fourth degree of prayer distinguished by her is a more perfect union of all the powers of the soul, suspended and absorbed in God, as she explains at large. This is accompanied with so great interior joy and delight, that the Saint assures us, a single moment would be, even in this life, a sufficient recompense for all the pains we can have undergone. St. Teresa distinguishes the prayer of Union, in which her soul was able to resist the Divine operation, from a rapture or ecstasy in which it could not resist, and in which her body lost all the use of its voluntary functions, and every part remained in the same posture, without feeling, hearing, or seeing, at least so as to perceive it; though she says, on such occasions the soul knows she is in a rapture, whilst she is by the most ardent love ravished in God. These raptures continue sometimes for hours, though not all that time in the same degree. In them the soul sees in a wonderful and clear manner the emptiness of earthly things, the greatness and goodness of God, and the like. St. Teresa mentions, that having suffered two raptures in the church, which could not escape the observation of others, she prayed that this might no more happen to her in public, and from that time it had not, when she wrote: but this was not long after. She says she was sometimes raised from the ground in prayer, though she endeavoured to resist it.

After having exercised herself twenty years in mental prayer, she began to withdraw herself from the conversation of secular persons, and was favoured by God frequently with the prayer of Quiet and that of Union. In her ecstasies revelations were imparted to her, with visions, and other great favours, all which served continually to humble and fortify her soul, to give her a strong disrelish for the things of this life, and to inflame her with the most ardent desires of possessing God. In raptures she was sometimes elevated in the air, of which she gives the following description. Having said that the soul has the power of resisting in the prayer of Union, but not in raptures in which her soul was absolutely carried away, so that she could not stop it, she adds: "Sometimes my whole body was carried with it, so as to be raised up from the ground, though this was seldom. ..... When I had a mind to resist these raptures, there seemed to me somewhat of so mighty force under my feet, which raised me up, that I know not what to compare it to. ..... All my resistance availed little; for when our Lord hath a mind to do a thing, no power is able to stand against it. ..... The effects of this rapture are great. First, the mighty power of the Lord is hereby made manifest; for when he is pleased, we are no more able to detain our bodies than our souls: we are not masters of them, but must, even against our will, acknowledge that we have a superior, that these favours come from Him, and that of ourselves we are able to do nothing at all: and a great impression of humility is made on the soul. Further, I confess it also produced in me a great fear (which at first was extreme) to see that a massy body should be thus raised up from the earth. For though it be the spirit which draws it after it, and though it be done with great sweetness and delight (if it be not resisted), yet our senses are not thereby lost; at least I was so perfectly in my senses, that I understood I was then raised up. There also appears hereby so great a majesty in him who can do this, that it makes even the hair of the head stand on end; and there remains in the soul a mighty fear to offend so great a God. Yet this fear is wrapped up in an excessive love, which the

soul conceives afresh towards Him, whom she finds to bear so great a love to such wretched worms as we are. For He seems not content with drawing the soul to Himself, but he will needs draw up the very body too, even whilst it is mortal, and compounded of so filthy an earth as we have made it by our sins. This favour also leaves in the soul a wonderful disengagement from all the things of this world. In raptures of the spirit alone there seems a total loosening of the soul from all things, as it concerns the spirit. But here it seems that also the body partakes of this disengagement. And it breeds such a new aversion and disgust of the things of this world, that it makes even our life much more painful to us," &c.

Bishop Yepez relates, that the Saint, when she was prioress of the convent of St. Joseph, at Avila, as she was going to receive the communion at the hands of the bishop Don Alvarez, of Mendoza, was raised in a rapture rather higher than the grate through which (as is usual in nunneries) she was to receive the holy communion; of which also sister Mary Baptist, prioress of Valladolid, was an eye-witness with others. Likewise Vannes, a very learned theologian of the Order of St. Dominic, whose name is famous in the schools, and who was for some time confessor to St. Teresa, testified that the Saint one day, in public, as she was raised in the air in the choir, held herself by some rails, and prayed thus: "Lord, suffer not, for such a favour, a wicked woman to pass for virtuous." He mentions other instances in the public choir; but says, that, at her earnest request, this never happened to her in public during the last fifteen years of her life. Richard of St. Victor teaches, that raptures arise from a vehement fire of Divine love in the will, or from excessive spiritual joy, or from a beam of heavenly light darting upon the understanding. We learn from St. Teresa, that these three effects of an external grace usually concur in raptures. She says, the faculties or powers of the soul are lost by being most straightly united to God, so that she thought she neither saw, nor heard, nor perceived any thing about her; but this was only for a very short space,

during the highest part of some raptures: during the rest of the rapture, the soul, though she can do nothing of herself as to the exterior or the voluntary motions of the body, understands and hears things as if they were spoken *from afar off*. When she returns to herself, her powers continue in some degree absorbed sometimes for two or three days.

All acknowledge that in these revelations the most secret *adyta* of the sanctuary are here laid open, and the most abstruse maxims which experience alone can teach, but no words utter, are explained with greater perspicuity than the subject seemed capable of bearing; and this was done by an illiterate woman, who wrote alone, without the assistance of books, without study, or acquired abilities, who entered upon the recital of the divine favours with sentiments of humility and reluctance!*

The works of St. Teresa are numerous; they are all of a devotional or instructive character. The arcana of Mystic Theology, in all its depths and heights, are evidently familiar to the writer of them. However marvellous are the revelations that we find in those works, however strained and frequently ill-chosen and applied the metaphors that abound in them, notwithstanding the manifest ignorance of the principal branches of human knowledge, and total unacquaintance with medical science, noticeable in those writings;—ignorance causing her frequently to attribute the effects of bodily ailments to spiritual influences;—anguish of mind, fits of despondency, and mental hallucinations to Satanic agency; natural phenomena to special interpositions of Providence, and though the results in numerous instances were of little moment, and in many cases proved of no lasting utility, the sincerity, piety, and humility of the author, are beyond all doubt. We cannot carefully examine those works of the Saint's without being persuaded that a state of spirituality, such as hers, could hardly be attained without a great gift of prayer and of humility, great powers of self-concentration, abstraction, and recollection, and signal favours from

* Life of St. Teresa, abridged by the Rev. Alban Butler, pp. 31 *et seq.* 12mo. *Dub.* 1794.

the Almighty, leading to ultimate communion of the spirit with Him.

Those who will not give credence to any account by Christian writers of the flight of the soul, and of union during this life with the Supreme Being, may find a passage on this subject in a pagan author, that may seem to them deserving of some attention. "A passage so sublime and full of meaning," says Matthias, in his Pursuits of Literature, "that without a paraphrase it is absolutely impossible to render it."

"Such is the life of gods, and of godlike, happy, highly-favoured men; a deliverance and separation from the low cares of mortality. It is a life which receives not its pleasures and satisfaction from the things of this world; an ascent or flight of the soul, which is one, simple, and uncompounded, to that Being who is ONE, *and* ALONE in an eminent and incommunicable sense, GOD HIMSELF!"*

St. Teresa, in her book of "The Mansions," devotes a portion of a chapter to "The Flight of the Soul to the one true God," and might with advantage to her subject, have placed the passage from Plotinus at the head of that chapter.

In dealing with the phenomena of which we read, in the works of those who are versed in mystic sciences, we have to consider the power of our mental faculties, and the extent to which God has enabled man to investigate the secrets of creation.

We are told, that "the human mind can receive no other direct impressions than those communicated by the organs of sensation, nor can form any ideas but such as are drawn from those impressions." Sensitive ideas, or those proceeding from sensation, are simple, compound, and complete. Reflective ideas are formed by the operation of the mind in contemplating ideas thus received, by which we judge not only of the qualities, use, and properties of things observed, but of those with which by our nature we are unacquainted.

* Ουτο Θεων, και ανθρωπων θειων και ευδαιμονων βιος, απαλλαγη τωι αλλων των τηδε, βιος ανηδονος των τηδε, ΦΥΓΗ ΜΟΝΟΥ ΠΡΟΣ ΜΟΝΟΝ. —*Plotini Ennead*, 6, l. 9. c. xi.

This order consists of comparative, relative, and analogical ideas. With the latter we have most to do, in considering the phenomena which are supposed to have any *rapport* with those of somnambulism. Analogical ideas are formed by reflexion on deductions from relative and comparative ideas, by which notions, more or less probably correct, are formed of things which we can have no knowledge of, by the organs of sensation.

To this class of ideas we must refer the revelations of ecstatic somnambulists, the visions of mystic philosophers, the theories and hypotheses of speculative sages.

Philosophers, however, have an easy way of resolving all difficulties that are presented to them, in well-authenticated accounts of visions, raptures, and ecstasies of religious persons like St. Teresa. Imagination effects all the wonders. Old Burton, in his Anatomy of Melancholy, tells us, in his quaint way, "Fracast. (*l. 3. de intellect*) refers all extasies to this force of imagination; such as lye whole dayes together in a trance, as that priest priest whom Celsus speaks of, that could separate himself from his senses when he list, and lie like a dead man void of life and sense. Cardan brags of himself, that he could do as much, and that when he list. Many times such men, when they come to themselves, tell strange things of heaven and hell, and what visions they have seen; as Sir Owen in Matthew Paris, that went into St. Patrick's Purgatory, and the monks of Evesham in the same author. Those common apparitions in Bede and Gregory, Saint Briget's revelations, Wier, *l. 3. de lamiis c.* 11, Cæsar Vanninus in his Dialogues, &c. reduceth, with all those tales of witches' progresses, dancing, riding, transformations, operations, &c. to the force of imagination, and the devil's illusions. The like effects almost are to be seen in such as are awake; how many chimæras, anticks, golden mountains, and castles in the air, do they build unto themselves! I appeal to painters, mechanicians, mathematicians."

St. Augustine gives the following description of ecstasies:—"When the attention of the mind is entirely diverted from the odi ly sensations, this is what is called ecstasies. In this case,

although the eyes may be open, all the objects which are present are not perceived: voices are not heard; all the attention of the mind is fixed upon the images of bodies, by a species of spiritual or intellectual vision, in which it is concentrated on incorporeal things, which are not presented in any substantial image."—St. Aug. de Gen. lib. xii. cap. 11.

St. Augustine afterwards makes mention of an ecstasy of a young man, who, in a fit of sickness, became entranced and insensible to pain and to surrounding objects. On coming to himself, he said he had seen the joys of Paradise, and the blessed playing on musical instruments in a place of most brilliant light, and spoke of the damned being in a place of thick darkness.

In the Roman Catholic Church the phenomenon of persons in a state of trance or ecstasy, speaking in languages of which they had no previous knowledge, is regarded as one of the indubitable signs of demoniac possession. Colquhon observes, that it appeared among the nuns of Loudon, the prophets of the Sevennes, and the convulsionaires of the cemetery of St. Medard, in Paris; and the mystics, in fine, of all ages and religions. "The faculty of seeing without the use of the visual organs, and of hearing without the employment of the auricular one, in the 'perfect crisis,' of somnambulism either of spontaneous occurrence, or produced by artificial means, there can now be no reasonable doubt of."

These phenomena are minutely and elegantly described in the Hamartigema, by Prudentius, a Latin poet of the fourth century.

The communication of thought in a language novel to the thinker, is hardly more extraordinary than the transmission of the powers of one organ to another.

The communication of thought likewise, as if by volition, without the medium of language, looks, or signs, and the fact of obeying an order given, without a single word spoken, or sign given, is one of the indications of possession which is laid down as justifying recourse to the prescribed form of exorcise.

With respect to modern revelations of another kind, it may be observed:—We receive accounts of the spiritual world, and solutions of the mysteries of nature, from persons not remarkable for superior intelligence, or pre-eminent for piety, humility, or benevolence; from persons, humanly speaking, to whom we should not look for deep philosophy, or manifest evidence of inspiration.

The seers of mesmerism owe nothing, we are told, to imagination, when they are in the superior condition; nor to the ministration of angels, good or evil, to bring them into communication with the spiritual world, nor to any mediate influences of a religious nature, leaving impressions in the mind of objects representative of divine realities. They soar all at once to the highest heaven, and penetrate all its glories.

They come back to earth, however, unawed, undazzled, and unconscious of any mighty change effected in their souls, or momentous matter in this world committed to their care.

It cannot also fail to strike the reader who is at all conversant with the writings of the seers of mesmerism, what similitudes, in minor circumstances, there are in them, with those that are found in some of the revelations of St. Teresa. It appears almost impossible that the latter have not been read by the ecstatic somnambulists of mesmerism. Such striking resemblances do we find in the accounts of their communications with the spiritual world, with the similar descriptions of the raptures of St. Teresa, that on any other ground it would be difficult to account for. It would be indeed impossible on other grounds to account for them.

On the other hand, it must be observed, that with respect to more important matters which touch the great doctrines of Christianity, the revelations of the seers are usually not only at variance with those of St. Teresa, but at variance not unfrequently with the revelations of divine inspiration itself. The revelations of ecstatic somnambulism, of mesmerism, are of an eclectic character; there are numerous traces of a tendency in them to borrow ideas, to recast, reproduce, and dispose of them

as original. There are very few clairvoyants of celebrity now in existence, whose revelations are not at variance with very many of the great doctrines of Christianity. It is not so with the revelations of St. Teresa.

We must bear in mind the influences ascribed to mental prayer by St. Teresa, in forming any judgment of those phenomena which we meet with in the visions and revelations of Savonarola.

Without a full knowledge of those influences, we never can comprehend the accounts we read of Fra Girolamo's predictions and revelations.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TEACHING AND PREACHING OF SAVONAROLA.

"Vocem adyti dignum templo."

——"Omnes
Admonet, et magnâ testatur voce per umbras,
Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos."
VIRG. *Æn.* 6.

"He gives admonition to all, and cries with a loud voice through the shades, give ear unto me and be warned; revere justice, and despise not the power of the Gods."

THE "Triumphus Crucis" is the great work of Savonarola, by which his name is destined to live in distant ages, and his memory to be reverenced by all Christian people.

In the first chapter, he shews that it is not sufficient to know God, as the philosophers do, through his visible works in nature, but through the majesty and glory of his Son Jesus Christ, who is invisible to us. And these are to be known, not through rhetorical books of sophists and sages, but by faith, which is a supernatural light infused by God into our souls.

The second chapter sets forth the scheme of redemption, the whole progress of the divine mission of the Redeemer, terminating in the triumph of the cross.

This progress he makes a subject for meditation, as sublime as it is in the power of piety and of poetry of the highest order to make it. The career of Christ on earth, with all its miracles, is thus symbolized:

"It is desirable to present all those passages in one image to the mind, representing a triumphal chariot, so that the hum-

blest intellect may comprehend that which is set before it for contemplation, not only in each separate part, but all the passages combined in one spectacle.

"Let us first imagine we behold a chariot with four wheels, and on it, in a triumphant manner, Christ crowned with thorns, with innumerable injuries (evidences of), contumelies, and most wicked and shameful punishments, and the kind of death he underwent, and superadded to them the exhibition of livid wounds and cicatrices of the whole tortured frame.

"A globe of light most brilliant shines with dazzling rays—*trina facie*—emblematic of the Trinity, which, with ineffable splendour, illuminates at once the Redeemer and his church. Christ must seem to us to hold in his left hand a cross, with the other instruments of torture of his passion, and in his right hand the sacred books of both Testaments. At his feet let the chalice be placed, with the host upon it, and around it several vases of water, wine, oil, and balsams, with the other types of the sacrament of the church.

"Immediately below the step on which Christ is stationed, let his mother, the most clement Virgin Mary, sit. Below the place of the Virgin and around it, let there be golden, silver, and crystalline vases ranged, adorned with precious stones and gems, not wanting the bones and ashes of the dead therein. Before the chariot are to be seen the apostles and all preachers of the word, as if aiding to draw the chariot, with the patriarchs and the prophets of the Old Testament, with an innumerable band of men and women going before them. Around the chariot let a vast concourse of martyrs throng, of both sexes and of all conditions, and by their side let there be doctors of the universal church—*universi Doctores*—holding the sacred Scripture in each hand.

"Then let there follow the chariot an infinite multitude of either sex of all nations and races of mankind: Jews, Greeks, Latins, Barbarians, of the rich and poor, of sages, scholars, of the unlearned of all ages, sending forth plaudits.

"But all around these, in advance and in the rear, let us place

numberless throngs of enemies opposing the church with all their strength—for instance, emperors, kings, princes, and potentates of the world. Sages also, and philosophers and heretics, tribes of all tongues and nations, enslaved or free, and husband and wife, and in all relations an infinite concourse of all sorts of people. And close to them let there be represented shattered images of gods, and idols destroyed, scattered around in fragments. Moreover, let there be there the ashes of the burned books of heretics, and the confuted dogmas of other sectaries—*confutataque cæterarum sectarum dogmata*—and the worship of all other religions (but his) cast down and overthrown.

"In this way, therefore, the chariot thus set up and accompanied, being represented before our eyes, will be like unto a new spectacle of universal interest, from which it will be in our power to derive a new kind of knowledge. . . Thus philosophers having before their eyes the order of the universe, and considering its effects with admiration and ardour, learning by their researches the very causes of those natural effects by little and little, from inferior to superior things ascend to the knowledge of the divine majesty of invisible things. So shall it be with us if, pursuing our enquiries diligently, daily and incessantly, respecting the results of this triumph of the cross, the image of which has been represented to our minds, we begin to admire and to inquire into the causes of those effects, and thus, by degrees, we shall arrive at the knowledge of the divinity and the invisible things of his majesty."*

With a view of further shewing on what foundation the teaching and the preaching of this man rested, I lay before my readers a single chapter, which has the merit of being short, as well as most saintly in its doctrine, from the great work of Savonarola, "The Triumph of the Cross," which I have translated from the Italian version, made by its author from the original Latin.†

* Triumphus Crucis sive de Veritate Fidei, lib. iv. *Bat.* 1633, lib. i. pp. 9, *et seq.*

† I quote this chapter from the quarto edition in both languages.

CHAPTER II. BOOK 2.—*That there is an interior worship and another exterior.*

"As God can be honoured by men in two manners, namely, with the spirit and with the body, we say that one worship is interior and the other exterior. The interior manifests itself to God by the intellect and by the will. The exterior exhibits itself by corporeal works, ceremonies, and sacrifices. The interior worship then, is properly, the righteousness of the heart towards God, and the perfection of the life of the man. And this, which is hence called the divine worship, is principally designed to honour God: but man cannot honour God more than by the perfection of his life, as every effect in its perfection renders the more honour to its cause: hence artificers acquire honour and glory in the perfection of their works. There not being then in this world any effect more worthy of man, no greater honour can be given to God by him: and the more honour is given by man, the more perfect is his life. Then it appears that the greatest honour man can manifest to God is the perfection of his life, and so it follows that this is the true and integral divine worship.

"Thus we render worship to God not solely to honour him, but also to procure our own felicity. Hence it appears that the divine worship is a disposition and means of ours to attain our ultimate aim and end. A good life, therefore, being a better means to attain beatitude than sacrifices and ceremonies, it is necessary to say that a good life is a much more true worship than an exterior one.

"Besides, God not being corporeal, but pure spirit, it is certain that man renders to him a more perfect worship by purity of heart than by exterior acts. That God is a spirit, and he who adores God should adore him in spirit and in truth."*

Yet it was deemed necessary for the interests of religion, as they were understood by Alexander VI., to hang the man who

* Gloriosus Triumphus Crucis, Fra Hier. Savonarola, lib. ii. cap. 11.

gave expression to such thoughts as these, as if he were a dog, or even worse than a beast, to burn his dead body, and cast even his ashes into the Arno: such remains as his not being deemed worthy of Christian burial.

In the treatise of Savonarola, "On reading the Holy Scriptures," we find other observations of his which could only be made by one eminently Christian, and skilled in the science of salvation.

"It is necessary for him who would profit by spiritual reading, and penetrate the Sacred Scriptures, above all things to cleanse the heart well, not only from every mortal sin, but also from all self-love, and to read not only that he may teach, but in the first place to learn for himself how to live well; and whenever he begins to read, he should first pray that God would enlighten him in the way of truth, and then read diligently, not carelessly, but considering and remembering the sentences, and referring even to his conscience," &c. .....

Of contemplative prayer, Savonarola thus speaks in his treatise, *Dell' amore di Jesu Christo*, which was first published in Florence, in 1493.

"When the kind and loving Jesus influences a soul which really loves and seeks him, he bestows on the intellect so much light, and so warms the affections, and fills them with such delight in his benignity and presence, that he raises the soul above itself, and softens it so, that the abundant sweetness descends from the superior part to the inferior, which melts into tears. And He awakens so great a longing in the mind for eternal things, that it sojourns on earth as if separated from the body, and absorbed in spirit. It is true this is the privilege of few. This we see every day in religion; and when any one begins to enjoy the Holy Spirit, he is glad to be alone, and immediately separates himself from other comforts and corporeal recreations, which would not be if he did not feel within his breast greater consolations than those he refuses. But what is this spiritual comfort—repose of mind, peace, sweetness, gentleness, joy, exultation, triumph, love, ardent desire, celestial intoxication, almost eternal felicity, or whatever else it may be called? I do

not think it can be explained or understood, but by experience: let it suffice at present that we have proved this consolation, which proceeds from the love of Jesus, whatever it is, to be beyond comparison greater than all worldly pleasures."

Of that kind of spiritual prayer or meditation which in mystic theology is described as the supernatural union of the soul of man with the divine essence, Savonarola speaks in one of his sermons of a subsequent date. "This remedy has been ever found the most efficacious to restore happiness to man, and which, as it consists in the Divine essence, might have appeared impossible from the Divine sublimity, and the meanness of our intellect, had not God been pleased to unite the human nature to the divine in one person, which is more wonderful than the union of the souls of the blessed, to the divine soul in that person, so that men have hope of being able to arrive at that glory: hence we see, that since this incarnation men begin to arise again, and aspire to the former blessedness."

Elsewhere, in his discourse on Heb. iv. 4—6, he says—"When the soul feels warmed by this tender love, enjoying a spark of heavenly things, it should be ever watchful over itself, that, as far as it is permitted by its frailty, it may not offend the eyes of the merciful Jesus, who has given it such a treasure, reflecting how great would be the ingratitude of separating from him by its own negligence, and being so much the more careful in proportion as it has tasted his sweetness, and experienced its own infirmity."

Dr. Hafe refers particularly to one of the treatises of Savonarola, which affords the clearest evidence that Savonarola owed whatever spiritual or supernatural gifts he possessed to a great power of prayer, of contemplation, and meditation on the divine attributes, in which all his faculties were wont to be absorbed, and his soul placed in intimate communion with the spiritual world. The piece referred to is entitled *De Simplicitate vitæ Christianæ*.

"In Savonarola's work, entitled, 'Of The Simplicity of a Christian Life,'" says Dr. Hafe, "he has ascribed every really Christian life to the following of Jesus in this simplicity of

heart, which is opposed to every deceit in art, even in the outward mode of life, though attentive at the same time to the necessities of the seasons, calling in life, serving the Lord like the busy Martha, yet giving away all superfluities; for God has distributed unequally his blessings, in order that those who have them may give to the needy. This Christian simplicity emanates from the goodness of God, nevertheless man can augment it to render himself more susceptible of it by prayer, contemplation of death, meditation on the Scriptures, in all kinds of religious exercises, particularly by fasting, as also by abstaining outwardly and inwardly from every sinful enjoyment, even in thought and sentiment. Its end is union with God, who is infinite simplicity, so that the believer, released from all earthly cares, chooses only the one thing necessary: all that he thinks or that he loves, he thinks and loves only in reference to God; all that deserves hatred, he hates only in reference to God; whereby he is blessed by the possession of the highest good."

But Savonarola appears to most advantage, adds Dr. Hafe, as an orthodox teacher of the Church, in his work entitled "The Triumph of the Cross,"* a defence of Christianity, with respect to its fundamental dogmas, which defence is founded especially on the effectiveness of that faith against an education which, resuscitating classical antiquity, if not the belief in its gods, teaches, at least, the disbelief in a crucified God, and inclines its votaries to regard as a fable what the clergy teach concerning the Resurrection.

Hafe then, in a brief summary, refers to the subject of the second chapter, which we have already noticed.

"The argument of this apology therefore is embodied in a picture representing Christ as a conqueror, with the marks of his wounds and with the crown of thorns, around which is a treble circle of rays; at the left, are the cross, and the other instruments

* This book was thought so much of, that the Cardinal of St. Onofrio, Antonio Barberini, brother to Urban the Eighth, set aside five hundred ducats in his will, to be applied to the printing of a good edition of it, and the exposition of the fifty-first Psalm.

of martyrdom; at the right, the Scriptures drawn on a triumphal car, proceeding before him are the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles; near them, the Martyrs and great Fathers of the Church, and following behind an innumerable troop of the faithful."*

Of the alleged predictions of Savonarola, Philip de Commines gives the following account, and of their author:—

"While I was at Florence, on my way to the king (A.D. 1494), I went to pay a visit to a certain friar, called Fra Girolamo, who by report was a very holy man, and had lived in a reformed convent fifteen years. There went along with me one John Francis, a very prudent person, a steward of the king's household.

"My reason for going to see him, was because he had always preached very much in the king's favour, and his words had kept the Florentines from turning against us; for never had a preacher so great an influence over a city: he had constantly foretold the king's coming, (notwithstanding all that was said or written to the contrary,) affirming that he was sent by God to drive the tyrants out of Italy, and that nothing could resist or withstand him; he had likewise said, that he would come to Pisa, and that he would enter the city, and that on the same day the Florentine State would come to an end; and so it happened; for that very day was Peter de Medici expelled: and many other things had he foretold in his sermons, before they came to pass, as the death of Lorenzo de Medicis: and he likewise said publicly, that it was revealed to him. He had preached that the state of the Church should be reformed by the sword. This was not yet accomplished, but it was at one time very near the point, and he still maintained that it should be effected. Several persons blamed him for pretending to divine revelations, others believed him. For my part, I think him a good man: and I asked him whether the king could proceed in his journey without any danger to his person, considering the great preparations of the Venetians against him, of which he was able to give a better account than I could, who was just come from Venice. He answered, that the king would meet with some difficulties

* Hafe's Neue Propheten, p. 312.

by the way, but he would overcome them all, and gain immortal honour by it, though he had not above a hundred men in his company, and that God who had conducted him hither, would guard him in his return: but because he had not applied himself as he ought, to the reformation of the Church, and because he had suffered his soldiers to plunder and rob the people as well as those of his own party, and such as had opened their gates freely to him, as his enemies, that God had pronounced judgment against him; and that he should shortly feel a lash of the whip. However, my task was to tell him, that if he would have compassion on the people, keep his army from doing mischief, and punish them when they did, as his duty required, God would revoke or mitigate his sentence; and that it was not sufficient for him to plead, *I myself do no harm.* He added, that he would go himself to meet the king, and would tell him these words, and so he did, and spoke of the restitution of the Florentine places. When he mentioned that sentence of God, the death of the dauphin came very fresh into my mind; for I knew nothing else that the king could lay so much to heart; and this I likewise say, to the end it may be better understood how the whole of this expedition was a mystery conducted by God himself."*

Centuries before the time of Savonarola, men of saintly lives announced events that would come to pass, which from any exercise of the reasoning powers, or mere speculations on former occurrences or present circumstances, or any light they could obtain from natural knowledge only, they could not have foretold. We are told by Neander, in his life of St. Bernard, that when the French king, Louis the Sixth, seized on some property of the archbishop and clergy of Paris, St. Bernard wrote to the King in their behalf: and not satisfied with writing only, when the rapacious sovereign disregarded all supplications, and remained inexorable, St. Bernard proceeded to the Court, and reproached the King vehemently with having despised the priests of the Most High, and concluded with this menace: "Your obstinacy

* Memoires de Philip de Commines, lib. viii. cap. 2.

will be punished by the death of your eldest son Philip; for last night in a dream I saw you with your youngest son Louis fall at the feet of the bishops whom you yesterday set at nought, and hence I infer that the death of your first-born is at hand, and will compel you to implore the favour of that Church which you now oppress, to allow you to set your son Louis in his place." *

In the course of about three years Prince Philip died, in consequence of a fall from his horse, and the King caused the young Prince to be consecrated in the room of his brother, as his successor on the throne.

St. Bernard here revealed events manifested to his mind in a vision, which eventually came to pass about three years later. No one suspects St. Bernard of imposture, or of aught to do with Satanic agency. Why are similar revelations concerning a French sovereign by Savonarola so very differently treated, even by religious persons?

Several writers, Catholic and Protestant, have undertaken to remove what they assert is an erroneous idea, namely, that Savonarola laid claim to divine inspiration, and the gift of knowledge of future events supernaturally revealed to him. The author of the English life of Savonarola and the author of the letters of Columbanus assert that Savonarola has claimed no such pretensions. Such, however, is not the fact. Savonarola made a distinction, very fine drawn it must be allowed, between calling himself a prophet and claiming the gift of inspiration.

In the Compendium of his Revelations, published by himself some years before his death, in the most distinct terms he claims the gift.

Yet, in defending himself against the charge of impiety brought against him on account of his alleged pretensions to the character of a prophet, in one of his letters to Pope Alexander, he says:—

"It is said that I speak with God. I have never affirmed

* Neander's Life of St. Bernard. p. 35. 12mo. *Lon.* 1840.

this, or any thing like it, as all Florence can testify. But, if I had done so, I should have incurred no penalty. It is not written in the canon or the civil law, or in any book of authority, that if one says, he speaks with God he should be punished: for foolish indeed and impious would be such a decree, for who can impose laws on God? He can speak with whom He will, and command them to tell it as the prophets did—'Thus saith the Lord.'"

We have only to turn to Nardi's account of the embassy of Savonarola, and his report of the discourse delivered by the Friar to the French sovereign, to find the most clear proof of this claim of Savonarola to divine inspiration in his own words, after an exordium of some length, wherein he informed the King "that God had revealed to his unprofitable servant who then addressed his Majesty a mystery—that He meditated the renewal of His Church by the operations of a great scourge. Which mystery His unprofitable servant, already four years ago, according to the Divine inspiration and revelation vouchsafed to him, announced in the city of Florence; since when, even to this day, he has not ceased with loud voice to exhort the people to repentance."

In 1495 Savonarola published in Florence the most remarkable of his compositions, entitled, "Compendio Di Revelatione Dello Inutile servo di Jesu Christo Frate Hieronymo da Ferrara Dello Ordine de Frati Predicatori."*

In the prologue, he says, before he enters into the matters he has to speak of, "It is necessary to understand the manner in which prophetic revelations are inspired by God which are declared to the people—*el modo delle revelationi prophetiche, ad fine chi ognuna intende come gli propheti imperando da Dio quello que predicano a popoli.*"

Then he observes, "He who now is called a prophet, formerly was called a seer—*vocabant olim videns.* He is properly

* This work, consisting of eighty-six pages 8vo. in the author's possession, at the end has the words "Re-correcta Stampata in Firenza de V. Sepbro. 1495."

named a prophet who sees things afar off, and not within the scope of the natural knowledge of any human creature.

"It comes to pass that the prophet also learns, by the medium of the light of prophecy, many things which are not far removed from the scope of human knowledge, because that light can be extended to all things, human as well as divine. Far removed from the scope of natural knowledge of every creature are future contingent events—*cose future contingente*—chiefly those which are dependent on free-will, which in themselves cannot be known by men, nor by any other created beings, because they are only present to the Eternal, whose knowledge embraces all times. ..... Their future contingency cannot be known by any natural light, but solely by God, who knows them in the eternity of His light, and by Him only are the things communicated to those to whom He deigns to reveal them. In such revelations there are two things done: one is, that God infuses a supernatural light into the mind of the prophet, which light is a certain degree of participation of His eternity (of knowledge). By such participation, the prophet judges of that which is revealed to him—that the revelation is true, and that it comes from God. And of such efficacy is this light, that the prophet is made certain of those two things above mentioned, as the natural light makes philosophers certain of the first principles of science, and as people are made certain that two and two make four. The other thing that God does in those revelations is, that He propounds distinctly to the prophet that which He wishes him to know and to declare, and that He does in various ways, as it is written in Osias, chap. xii. 'I have spoken by the prophets, and multiplied vision, and I have used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets.'"

"Sometimes that which the prophet has to declare, is infused into his mind without any visions of the imagination (visione imaginaria), but in the way in which wisdom was infused into the mind of Solomon; and in this way it was the prophet Daniel gave utterance to prophecy. Sometimes in the imagination various figures and visions of phantasy, which signify

that which the prophet has to understand and to declare; and he, by the light so infused, understands the signification of such visions, otherwise he could not be called a prophet. Hence it is written in Daniel, chap. x., 'There is need of understanding in a vision.' And many times in those visions different words spoken by various persons are inwardly thought to be heard, or so represented to the mind. And those words are understood by means of the light that proceeds from God, by the ministry of the angels. Sometimes God offers to the exterior senses, chiefly to the sight, types of things which are to be manifested, as we read in Daniel, in the fifth chapter, of the hand that wrote on the wall before the eyes of Balshazzar—'*Mene, Techel, Phares.*' Which words Daniel the Prophet saw with the external organs of vision, and interpreted by the internal light. It is to be observed that those external apparitions, and even those of the phantasy, are from God, and manifested by the ministry of angels, as St. Dionysius says in the first book of the Celestial Hierarchy, because every work of Apostolic agency, that is, of God, is ordered wisely—'Juxta illud apostoli.'

"And in the order of His wisdom, infinite things are accomplished by mediate agents, and mediate things by the ministry of Christ. The angels being mediate agents between God and man, the prophetic illumination comes from God by means of angelic spirits, who not only illuminate the interior mind, but cause divers apparitions to appear to the phantasy. But they also speak inwardly to the prophets; and to them they likewise appear many times in human form, and announce future things to them, and admonish them of many things they have to do. And by the divine light, the prophets clearly know those apparitions to be angelic, and that which is spoken to them to be true. *In these three manners we have attained and known future things: some in one way, some in another. Moreover, in each of these modes I have attained to the knowledge of them, and always have been certified of the truth by the aforesaid light.**"

* "In queste tre modi habbiamo havute e conosciute le cose future;

I have thought it better to transcribe the whole of this matter, which has never been done *in extenso* by any of the biographers of Savonarola previously, inasmuch as Savonarola here sets forth his ideas of the mode in which the prophetic spirit is infused into the minds of men favoured especially by God: and puts forward his own claims to the possession of that divine light, which enables the mind so illuminated to see into futurity far beyond the range of natural knowledge.

The reader will be better able to form a just opinion of those claims by having the precise words of the asserter of them, given to him, than by any amount of comments or criticism of a biographer in relation to them.

A German critic of great ability, the learned Dr. Hafe, a Protestant divine, and a professor in the University of Jena, in his recent work, "*Neue Propheten*," has treated largely and with great enlightenment of Savonarola's spiritual gifts and privileges.

"The compendium of Savonarola's Revelations," says Dr. Hafe, "is a short summary of his prophecies, written certainly when he was surrounded by opponents; but at a time when he was at the summit of his popularity, as a security against perverted official reports, and as a self justification. He gives in it an account from the very beginning of his prophetic predictions —also an account of his embassy to the king of France, and of his participation in the changes which had taken place in the Republic. As it is reserved to divine wisdom to foreknow the casualties that depend on the free will of others, the Prophet can only learn such things from a supernatural light infused into him by God, who permits him thereby to participate in his eternity. The Prophet separates two things: the truth which is evident to him, and that which is revealed by God. The understanding is opened to futurity, either directly, without any apparent means, or by visions from the impression of images on the imagination, or else by external typical appearances; the last two means are

alcune in uno, alcuno in altro benchi in qualunque di questi modi in le habbi havutte sempre son stato certificato della verita per el lume predecto." —*Compendio di Revel. Prol.*

generally effected by the instrumentality of the angels, and the prophet, aided by a supernatural light, understands the meaning of visions and apparitions.

"Savonarola declares that he received these three kinds of revelations. He divides them, from the example of the Scriptures, into unconditional and conditional prophecies. Of the first kind are the renovation of the Church, as also the remission of the sin of Florence, which pardon would have been revoked on account of the hostility to God of the people of Florence; but that, what is ordained by divine predestination, the repentance of the people is sure to come to pass. A conditional prophecy is one of the same description as that made by the Prophet Jonas, relative to the fall of Nineveh—for example, Savonarola's promise of triumphant success to the French king, on the condition of his carrying out the work of God in Italy.

"The predictions which Savonarola uttered, inspired as it were by a divine impulse when in the act of speaking from the pulpit, and which were there announced by him, (for he wishes to have passed over in silence such of his prophecies as were made in private and related only to private matters, about which besides he might have erred as man), are the most celebrated, such as the devastation of Italy, the passing of the Alps by an invading king, the impending reformation of the Church. That is to say, according to a divine decree, God would purify the church by a heavy scourge; and in order that the elect might not be unprepared for what was about to happen, that God had selected his unworthy servant as bearer of this revelation, and disseminated it through him as superior of an order in Florence; so that from Florence, which is in Italy, as the heart is in a man, the centre of a kingdom, the revelation of this beginning of salvation might go forth. He acquired for himself still more fame by his prophecy of the death of Lorenzo, and of the Pope, Innocent the Eighth, which was fulfilled, although there had not been any indications of their approaching end previous to his prediction. He professed also to foretell even things which were to take place immediately: the conversion of the Turks and Moors, the coming glory of Florence.

"This last prophecy had a very simple and patriotic purport, he predicts, and predicts with divine inspiration, that whatever enemy should take possession of Florence, without having received any injury from its republican government, would be overtaken by divine vengeance; whatsoever citizen of Florence, within or without the town, who should aspire to its sovereignty, he and his whole house would sink to the depths of misery.

"During the first years of his activity in Florence, he only made profession gradually of his powers of prophecy, although he possessed already a high acquaintance with hidden things; yet, as he saw the minds of men were not prepared for these mysteries, he for a while only appealed to probable grounds and the Scriptures. At last he began to bring forward his prophetic visions under the form of parables. When, sometimes from the fear of the contradiction and scoffing of men, he wished to preach of other matters, God would not permit it; once he passed the entire Saturday and the following sleepless night seeking for something else, but in vain, every other subject was sterile to him.

"Early in the spring of 1492, he ventured to speak more explicitly: 'Thus, saith the Lord God, the sword of the Lord shall fall quickly on the earth.' Presently there came to him from heaven words of admonition, which, because they sounded like Hebrew poetry, were imagined to be taken from Holy Writ.

"The above discourse about the word was the result of a vision of the night, in the style of the revelations of St. John, and it appeared to him that it was in visions that he first found out that he was possessed of supernatural knowledge.

"A great part of the book is taken up with an exposition of a vision of this kind: the history of a communication with the blessed Virgin, and of a mission which he, as a minister of religion of Florence, had undertaken after much prayer and fasting, and had discharged, bearing a crown with him as an offering on that mission. Under the forms of two females, Philosophy and Rhetoric offered themselves to him as companions on this mission, but he rejected them as appertaining too

much to the senses, and made choice instead, of faith, simplicity, piety, and patience, with whom he arrived at the gates of Paradise.

"The description of what he saw therein is scarcely less sublime and poetic than that of Dante's Paradise. The Virgin was seated on a lofty throne along with her divine child, whose divinity was only recognisable from a treble circle of rays round the head. Upon the steps of the throne were ranged the several orders of the blessed spirits and angels.

"The answer of the Virgin, full of grace, sounded at first very obscure: 'Florence, preserve thy belief in the Lord God, my beloved son—persevere in prayer, be strong in patience. For thereby shalt thou acquire eternal salvation with God and glory before men.'

"But as Savonarola prayed with outstretched hands for more particulars, she afterwards explained the meaning: 'Go hence and bring to my beloved people this answer; they have merited misfortunes on account of the incredulity of many, who will not believe what you have been predicting to them now for years. Therefore, impress upon them the necessity of laying aside their hardness of heart; if they do so, the state of Florence shall become more glorious, more powerful, and more rich than it ever was heretofore; it shall repair all its losses, and extend its territories. But woe to the seditious citizens; long since was it said, with respect to the inhabitants of Pisa, that he who seeks freedom by such means shall only meet his own destruction.'

"In fine, to the question whether Florence had to go through tribulations before these consoling events, she gave this answer: 'My son, for many years already hast thou been predicting the renovation of the Church: this consummation shall take place, and shortly also, but not without being followed by tribulation and war, especially in Italy, where the pride of the princes and chiefs, and the innumerable crimes that are committed, will be the cause of these evils. Thou must not, therefore, regard it as a misfortune that thy city shall have to endure tribulations; but she shall have less of them to suffer than the other States.'

"An episode enlivens the more serious parts of this vision: it

describes a conversation between Savonarola and the tempter of mankind, who, in the form of a venerable hermit, presented himself to him before the gates of Paradise, and in short and bitter words informed him of all that his enemies said against him, particularly against his prophecies, and also against his position as superior of the monastery, against his interference in the State, and against the Republican government. In his answers he brings forward, with the utmost clearness in intellect, from the Scriptures, from the lives of remarkable Saints, from the undoubted religious tendencies of his undertaking, everything that might serve in his defence.

"The tempter asked, why had God chosen him as bearer of his revelations? was he more holy than others? He retorted by the question, why had God chosen for Princes of his Apostles Peter who had denied him, and Paul who had persecuted him? Against the objection that many of his prophecies had not been fulfilled, he appealed to the nature of the prophetic spirit, which was not always present even to the prophets of old, which comes and goes, even when present is often only partially unveiled.

"The tempter pointed out also many other faults which Savonarola either denied or proved that he was deceived in taking for such; that he was only seeking to tempt him, but that he perceived his object; he added, that all his revelations announced from the pulpit had been fulfilled, or should be so shortly; that of those there should not remain an iota unaccomplished. Supposing it might be imagined that his prophecies were the work of a far-seeing, sagacious and lively imagination, he appeals against such a conclusion, partly to the known clearness of his understanding moulded by philosophy, partly to the fact that in all human probability what he foretold was most *unlikely* to happen. Sometimes all was at peace, and he announced approaching war; now the globe is moved with storms, and he predicts that there shall be shortly peaceful calms. When the Florentines imagined themselves prosperous, he had told them of coming misfortunes; now they are oppressed he

promises them soon the greatest prosperity. This prosperity, however, as well as the conversion of the Turks and Moors, was not to be witnessed by many of those then living. But as a proof that these should come to pass, he appealed to the fact, that through him and his prophecies things that had been considered impossible had been effected, such as the moral and political reformation of the Florentine states, and their wholesome consequences.

"After he had successfully defended his cause on all sides against the tempter, he remarked that his companion smiled, and christian simplicity opened his eyes, so that he was able to recognise the tempter of the human race, who immediately fled before his exorcisms.

"One is surprised, even in this extraordinary book, that he should expect us to regard as a supernatural vision, this most carefully composed work of the fancy, which was first delivered in a sermon, and which even imaginative people could not look on, as any thing more than a poetic fiction. However, he himself, according, at least, to a later exposition, does not by any means want it to be understood that he was really in Paradise, for all the external objects of which he speaks could not possibly be found there, but were only formed in his fancy, by the instrumentality of an angel however, as in similar visions of the ancient prophets, particularly Ezekiel's. One ought to recall on this subject the proofs that many other persons have given of a perfect belief in a supernatural agency. Thus, Angelico of Fiesole, regarding his disposition for painting holy pictures as a divine inspiration, would not venture to paint any of other descriptions; and Ruysbach, in all pious humility, attributed his obscure writings to the dictations of the Holy Ghost.

"After Savonarola began to see his expectations fulfilled by the expedition of Charles VIII., perhaps the fantastical forms in which his religious and patriotic hopes presented themselves to his imagination may have appeared to him as inspirations which, from the known workings of the Holy Ghost in his soul, lost nothing of their divine origin, and which, to make the more cer-

tainly pass for undoubted, he announced from the pulpit (his practice in relation to visions and revelations). 'This am I wont to do; to weigh first the natural grounds and certain signs (of things out of nature) in the scales of prayer and in the Scriptures.'"*

Of the predictions which Savonarola made respecting his own death and his excommunication, the following extracts will give some idea:—

For many years in his sermons, in different places, Fra Girolamo had predicted his death by violence, the torments to be inflicted on him, the calamities to be uttered against him, and even the very mode of putting him to death. Several of these predictions exist in sermons of his in works of Savonarola in my possession which were printed in Florence long prior to his death. Those predictions I will quote chiefly from the works of the father, the majority of which were published before his death.

In the church of San Lorenzo, 1490, in one of his sermons, he clearly and explicitly foretold his death. This sermon afterwards he translated into Italian. In one passage of it, he says—"We have to consider the when and how great will be the persecution (of which I speak) when the true preacher will be in the hands of the persecutors. Who could believe it that he shall be excommunicated and taken by force, when the Franciscans shall seduce people by their cunning and their polemics, when they shall practise hypocrisy, and pass among the people for saints?"

In the book of the Dialogue, he says—"These persons, excited therefore by the infernal furies, will persecute the preacher of the divine truth, and, like seductors and heretics, they will condemn him, using all efforts to discredit him with the people."

* Neue Propheten, Drei Historisch Politisch Kirchenbilder, von Dr. Karl Hafe, Professor an der Universitat Jena, &c. &c. 12mo. *Leipzic*, 1851, pp. 307, *et seq.*—For the translation of the several extracts in these volumes from the German work of Dr. Hafe, "Neue Propheten," I am indebted to the lady I have already referred to—Miss Hussey Walsh.

On another occasion, when preaching in San Marco on the Apocalypse, and making an exposition of that part in which death is spoken of as mounted on a pale horse, an artist who was present took a sketch of him, and had it engraved on copper, with the view of printing from it. When he shewed it to Fra Girolamo, the father said—"Nothing is wanting but three martyrs suspended in their shirts from a cross, which you had better put there." "And the artist did so," says Burlamacchi, "and I remember that many persons had impressions of it." "*And in this manner,*" continues Burlamacchi, "*I saw him hanged in the Piazza de Signori, as by his own instruction to the artist he had been previously drawn and represented.*"*

In a sermon (17) preached in Florence in the year following, he said, "I wish to make you understand that you have done very ill, and require to reform your city. Turn your fathers against me, and slay me! This is what remains to be done. *Ah, my people, what have I done to you?*"

In another part of the same sermon, he said, "Go and read the Scriptures through, and you will find that all those who have predicted future events have been put to death, and so I reckon it will be done with me. This is the treasure and the triumph I wish; I desire no other recompense. Let that treasure soon be mine, and my destiny be accomplished, to die in a little time for this mission and for Christ."

And again, in 1491, in his sermons on Amos (No. 23), when speaking of Amassa the priest, who turned against Amos, and said, "You fool, leave the city, and go among the herds of cattle and prophetize there among your equals, and struck him several times; and finally whose son put him to death, as he passed by the Temple," the Father said, "Marvel not at our persecutions; be not affrighted, my good people, at such being the end of the prophets! *This is our end—questo e il fin nostro*—and the reward we are to *expect in this world.* But this is the only recompense we seek."

In 1491, when expounding the psalm, "*Expectans, Expec-*

* Burlamacchi, p. 533.

tavi Dominum," he said, "The wicked will come to the sanctuary with fire and sword, and will break and burn the doors; and they will seize on the just, and in the principal place in the city they will burn them. And the remains of them which the fire shall not have consumed, nor the wind carried away, they will cast into the Arno."

Savonarola, in another of his sermons, plainly and explicitly told his hearers the truth he preached would triumph, but the preacher would be put to death. But the death of a man, he said, did not extinguish the truth that was in him—"It rather served to spread abroad the light." "The fire from which it emanates is kindled soon in many hearts. If they try to quench it in one bosom, then it bursts forth with a stronger flame in another."

In one of his sermons, before the fierce war of the Palleschi and their allies of the Franciscan order was waged on him, he said, "Sometimes it has happened to me to tremble at the apprehension of my dear little children failing in faith when they will see the terrible tribulations of the times. But, my dear little children, be courageous, because, at all cost, we are resolved to conquer, and the victory which we expect is to be obtained by prayer."

This prediction, says Monsieur Carle, was the prelude of a tempest, the gusts of which at first seemed under some occult control, but the storm soon burst forth in all its fury, howling in a terrific manner. It appeared that the nearer was the approach of that great struggle, a courage full of exultation took possession of the intrepid Athlete of Christ.

In the time of the plague at Florence, when the Father was visited by Fra Silvestro Maruffi, and one of the community, who was destined to die with him at the stake, showed some symptoms of fear of infection, Fra Girolamo said to him, "What is this? Why do you fear? Do you not know what kind of death is reserved for us? though the time we do not know, still the *fact* we know well, that we are doomed to die."

This knowledge, Burlamacchi says, was communicated to him when engaged in prayer, by an angel, who seemed to him to

bind his members with ropes and chains of fire, and then disappeared."*

On another occasion, preaching in the palace before the Signoria, he said, "This festival brings strongly to my mind that you will provoke the anger of God against you; for you will see the time when those who are innocent shall be accused, *and by torments made to confess that which they did not do*, and thus will be punished without having committed any crime. And then you will provoke the anger of God against you, for there is nothing so much provokes the anger of God as this crime of injustice."

On the subject of the odium he had encountered on account of his efforts with the French sovereign for the salvation of Florence and her citizens, in one of his sermons, preached in 1496, Fra Girolamo, not without good cause, addressed those grave reproaches to the fickle people of that city. "Oh ungrateful Florence! Oh people ungrateful towards God! I have done for you what I would not have done for my brothers in the flesh. *For them I have refused to seek the favours of any Prince, though many times I have received written communications from many of them to do so, which are still in my possession.* For you I set out from this city to seek the King of France; and when I found myself among all those strangers (of his Court), it seemed to me as if I was in hell. I said to that King things which you never would have dared to speak to him, and he was appeased not by me, but by God, and I can now declare, because the secret was made known to me, it was resolved that matters should end badly with you.

.... "That which I effected for you, oh Florence, has created for me the envy of a great number of persons in religion and among the laity. *Populus meus quid feci tibi.* Oh Florence, you are doing that which I will yet declare to you. You are doing the four things of which I have already spoken to you. And, finally, to be convinced that I seek no recompense from you, *fix me to a cross — cause me to be stoned—I will die rejoicing and content.*"

* Burlamacchi, p. 552.

Well, indeed, might Savonarola say to the Florentines, "My people, what have I done to you?" And, surely, more than the ordinary enlightenment of reason was in this man's mind when he plainly pointed out, in 1496, the doom that was reserved for him at the hands of this ungrateful people in 1498.

In 1495, on the night of Holy Friday, Fra Girolamo announced in a sermon that the conversion of the Infidels and the reprobation of many Christians had been revealed to him in a vision.*

It has been objected to Fra Girolamo's predictions in general, that some of them not having been accomplished, all must be false; and, foremost among these unaccomplished prophecies is the prediction declaring the conversion of the Infidels was at hand.

To this it is replied, by one of Savonarola's advocates (in Miscellanea Baluzii), that the extensive conversions of Infidels in the islands of the Indian seas in the year 1500, and those generally effected by St. Francis Xavier in the East Indies, in such vast multitudes, were an obvious accomplishment of the prediction.

In the following passages, from another sermon preached by Savonarola in 1495, we have a fair specimen of the pulpit eloquence and heroic spiritual zeal of the true monk of the 15th century:

"I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast thought me worthy to make me an arrow in Thy quiver, and to make me in sorrows and in troubles like to Thee.

"So, now, come forth, thou Satan! Awaken thy strength; set all thy engines at work: get all thy weapons ready to be used against me, for he who fears not death, what shall he fear beside?

"Hearken to my words, says the Evil One! I will give thee good counsel—touch not the places that have been left sore (by iniquity) if thou wouldst live in peace. I seek not thy counsel

* Burlamacchi, p. 546.

and thy peace: for thy peace is no peace, and thy war breaks not my peace." *

On the eleventh day of October, 1495, when Fra Girolamo recommenced his labours in the pulpit, after abstaining for some time from preaching, his language began to assume a more determined character of opposition to the Pope, Alexander the Sixth.

"Now we have permitted the body to repose a little, it is our intention, in the first place, to do two things. One purpose is to strive, and not to refrain from striving until death, but still to conquer, because the work of Christ must always conquer."

In another sermon, he said: "If I wished to be a flatterer, I should not to-day be in Florence; and, without doubt, I should not have my mantle torn, and I should know well how to avoid dangers. I should also know how to flatter; but woe to me if I did so. Lord, no; I desire not those things; I wish not for riches; I desire only your cross. Lord, let me be persecuted. Lord, I ask you the grace not to die in my bed, but that of shedding my blood as you did for me. My dear little children, doubt not; be strong; the Lord will send you help—qui est benedictus in sæcula." *

With respect to revelations, we find many of the minor predictions of Fra Girolamo noticed by writers of celebrity both cotemporary and modern.

On one occasion Fra Girolamo wrote to Count Galeotto Pico Mirandula, telling him that he had but a short time to live; that certain death awaited him, and heavy misfortunes were impending over his house; on which account he had better occupy himself with what concerned the other world, if he wished to escape eternal death. The son (John Francis Pico, author of the life of Savonarola,) remarks, that his father was then in his fifty-fifth year, and of so robust a constitution that he might have hoped to attain extreme old age; nevertheless, he only lived two years longer, and after his death, a bitter feud among his sons laid waste the paternal house and estates.

* Sermon of Savonarola, preached 17th Feb. 1495.

† Hist. de Sav. Carle, p. 275.

"All these stories of miracles," says Dr. Hafe, "deserve consideration, as they were elicited by chance from numerous unprejudiced sworn witnesses who were examined by judges, when the canonization of Savonarola was mooted; for it was the strongest wish of Pico and his friends to obtain Savonarola's canonization, or to prove, at least, that he deserved it. Thus, a pious writer announced him to be an inhabitant of heaven, and declared he should be honoured in the Church under the three titles of teacher of catholic truth, of a martyr, and of a prophet. It was also remarked, that Alexander the Sixth, in justifying himself, had said to a Florentine, 'It was your people, and your priests, who delivered him up to me.' As for him, he would willingly place Fra Girolamo among the blessed. This Pope, in truth, meant what he said; for he much preferred having his enemy among the blessed in heaven, than that he should be alive and working against him on earth."*

"On the subject," continues Hafe, "of his prophetic power, it may be remarked, that even the prophecies of the Old Testament might have appeared ambiguous to those who questioned them with a bad intention, and that Savonarola even proved himself a prophet in his providing against the weakness of the flesh, by exhorting his auditors frequently from the pulpit not to believe him, if ever he were to speak in contradiction to that which at any other time he had declared to be a divine commandment. Concerning his prophecies, Pico considers them most worthy of belief, and is disposed to regard the impassioned impromptus that occur in Savonarola's sermons as divine inspirations. He also believes the miraculous story of his apparition having been seen resplendent in the dusk, with a dove with gold and silver feathers sitting on his shoulder, who appeared to whisper something in his ear. Pico has given his authority for this anecdote. He had requested brother Silvestre to mention to him if he could state something supernatural in confirmation of Savonarola's sanctity, who then

* Hafe's Neue Propheten.

related to him the above imitation of the legend of Gregory the Great: he professed to have seen more than once this vision of the Holy Ghost under the form of a dove. But brother Silvestre was a sickly visionary. Of miraculous cures, Pico relates even the most trivial."*

* Hase's Neue Propheten.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TEACHING AND PREACHING OF SAVONAROLA.

"Pray God that it may be permitted me to preach the Gospel to the unbelievers.

"But we commend our bark to God, that he may come to its aid, if it should strike on rocks."

Sermon of Sav. *Lent*, 1495.

There must have been extraordinary power in the preaching of Savonarola. For eight years the enthusiasm inspired by his pulpit eloquence continued unabated and undiminished in Florence. His audiences were frequently moved by it to tears —the hardest hearts were softened by it. The literate and the unlearned were alike affected by his preaching, and among the vast numbers of conversions effected by it, were many of the first scholars and artists of Italy.

"The new style of preaching," which gave such offence to the enemies of the father, to the Franciscans of Florence, to the Medici, and to the court of Rome, was one which consisted in the application of the sacred Scriptures to all spiritual wants and disorders of the time: an impassioned eloquence of the highest order of oratory, unprepared, unpremeditated, abounding in poetic imagery, and producing, without any apparent effort, the most striking effects on the imaginations and understanding of his hearers.

Savonarola had departed from the old routine practice of the Italian pulpit, the constant preaching of the panegyrics of saints. He preached the Gospel to the people of Florence, in a language that showed he was filled with its spirit—that a mission had been given to him to labour to save souls—that he was faithful to

it; and that with all his zeal in the cause of Christ, with all his sanctity and terrible energy in reprehending vice, he was a man full of compassion and affectionate kindness for his fellow-men, sympathising with all their sufferings and misfortunes, and dealing with their miseries as a father would with those of his own children.

Mr. Roscoe says that "the Divine Word from the lips of Savonarola descended not amongst the audience like the dews of heaven: it was the piercing hail, the destroying sword, the herald of destruction." "But how different," says Dr. O'Connor, "are the accounts of all the coeval writers, who unanimously state that his eloquence was wonderful."* "In sacris concionibus admirabili facundia valuit," says Jovius, in his Elogiæ, c. xlii. p. 99. He repeats this in his Life of Leo. X., "Uomo di maravigliosa eloquenza," &c., L. i. fol. 99, 4to., *Venetia*, 1561. Bayle (with all his abuse) says, "C'est un fait constant qu'il se distingua d'une facon extraordinaire par l'austerité de sa vie, et par la ferveur eloquente avec la quelle il prechoit contre les mauvaises mœurs."

The style, manner, and matter of Savonarola's preaching were apostolic. *He spoke in the pulpit like one having authority.*

If we read the following four verses from the inspired writings, and bear them in mind when we are turning our attention to the succeeding extracts from Savonarola's sermons, we must be reminded of the authoritative tone and confidence of the great Florentine preacher.

"Speak to Zorobadel, the son of Salathiel, the governor of Juda, and to Jesus, the son of Josedec, the high priest, and to the rest of the people, saying:

"Who is left among you that saw this house in its first glory? and how do you see it now? is it not, *in comparison to that*, as nothing in your eyes?....

"And the word of the Lord came a second time to Aggeus, saying, Speak to Zorobadel, the governor of Juda, saying:

"In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, I will take thee, O

* Columbanus, No. vii. Rev. C. O. Connor, D.D.

Zorobadel, the son of Salathiel, my servant, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts."—Aggeus ii. 21, 22, 24.

Rio, in his admirable work, "La Poesie en l'Art," thus speaks of the preaching of Savonarola:

"His first sermons (in Florence, after he was appointed prior) were a series of discourses, expounding, in a manner calculated to excite alarm, certain passages in the Apocalypse, from which he deduced, with the tone and authority of a prophet, the approach of a great crisis for the church of God, and unheard-of tribulations for the people, who had not sought in penance a shelter from his wrath. The invasion of the French in Italy, and the occupation of Florence by a foreign king, have verified the predictions which specially concerned the Florentines, and afforded to Savonarola an opportunity to appear as their liberator. Gratitude and veneration for one who appeared to them the envoy of God, mingled with the enthusiasm already excited for the preacher; and the effect of all these united sentiments was so powerful, and so contagious with all classes of the people, that in reading of those times, one believes himself carried back to the most glorious ages of the primitive church. In order to have their share of that miraculous manna which fell so abundantly from heaven, the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages and hamlets left their dwellings, and the rustic mountaineers descended the sides of the Apennines to direct their steps to Florence, whither they were hurried in the time of pilgrimage every morning, when the gates were open, at the dawn of day, and where they were received with brotherly charity (by those of the citizens who were followers of Fra Girolamo).

"The duties of Christian hospitality were performed; the strangers were accosted in the streets as brothers, even before their names were known, and there was one of those pious citizens who received into his house even as many as forty of them at a time.

"When we reflect that that enthusiasm was maintained for some successive years, that Fra Girolamo found it necessary to

preach separately to men, women, and children, from the impossibility of admitting them all into the cathedral, that this unheard-of success was obtained in the midst of cries of anger from the faction of the *tepidi*, the lukewarm, who denounced him daily at the court of Rome, and openly threatened him with the scaffold, we are at a loss to discover what in Savonarola most claims our admiration—whether it be his inexhaustible fertility as an evangelical orator, or the ease with which he lifted up his soul above the region of popular tumult, or his truly supernatural confidence in assistance from a source that could not fail him.*"

In speaking of his sermons, Dr. Hafe says: "Savonarola has left behind him numerous writings, relating principally to the occurrences and difficulties of his office; from the most trifling of these compositions it is easy to recognise the operations of a great genius, especially in those not destined for publication, even in the most trivial sentences of his sermons and letters. These are written partly in Latin, a language which never became quite extinct in Italy, partly in the common language of the people, and the remainder in the pure Italian of Dante and Petrarch.

"Of the sermons he himself only prepared a selection for printing, the rest were transcribed and printed by his admirers. He was not without participating in the advantages of a learned education; for his order from the time of St. Thomas Aquinas was renowned for learning. He divested himself, however, in his sermons of scholastic formula and legendary illusions, not uninfluenced at the same time by the civilized tone of Florence, in direct opposition to the formal, world-pleasing manner of preaching of his cotemporaries, who enriched themselves from Cicero and Virgil, Dante and Petrarch. His sermons were drawn from the pure fountain of the Scriptures, and from the human heart; he also boldly grasped whatever was adapted from worldly life, without on that account avoiding elaborate and extensive allegories. He has in this way edified his auditors during a whole Lent, with an account of the mysteries of

* Rio, La Poesie en l'Art.

the building of Noah's ark. 'When I preached,' he says, 'of the subtle teachings of human wisdom, I remarked impatience depicted on the countenances not merely of the uneducated, but even more particularly on those of the most cultivated auditors; but when I enlarged on the majesty of Holy Writ, while I either explained its various meanings, or related its narratives, all eyes were turned towards me with admiring attention, fixed as those of statues.'

"Though he compared the preachers of his time to the singers and musical performers who gave expression to all kinds of mournful sounds before the house of the chief of the Synagogue, whose daughter had died, without being able to restore life to the dead body, yet he fully comprehended what the voice, vivified by the power of genius and the overpowering pressure of inspired conviction, was capable of performing; for, said he, 'Although there is an immense preponderance of those to whom my teachings and prophecies are a mockery, in proportion to the believers in them, yet in Florence itself the proportion is reversed; yes, among my *auditors* there is scarcely one who does not believe in me.'"*

By the concluding passages of one of those sermons of Savonarola, we may form some idea of the insufficiency of language to express the meaning of that divine love which is infused into the heart, by concentrating all its thoughts in God, in spiritual contemplative prayer:

"Soul, what art thou doing? Heart, what art thou thinking on? Tongue, why hast thou become silent? Where now are my elevated conceptions? Where are my sweet contemplations? Where are my words? I feel lost—I have wandered—I have wholly failed. I would declare my thoughts, and have not strength; I would speak, and have no voice; I would express my ideas, but my mind obeys me not. Oh, ungrateful heart! Oh, disobedient mind! Why dost thou not fulfil my desire? Open thine eyes, and look what a sad image is this day placed before thee. What heart is not afraid; what mind is not confounded; what cruel man becomes not pitiful; what

* Neue Propheten, p. 305.

eye can refrain from tears? Oh, pity! oh, charity! oh, infinite love! I have grievously sinned, and thou, Jesus, wert the sufferer. I have been thine enemy, and thou, Jesus, for my sake wert nailed to the cross."

The earliest sermon of Savonarola which has reached our times, is one of a series of discourses which he preached in Brescia, in 1484, on the fourth chapter of the Apocalypse, in which he first announced the calamities that menaced Italy. In this sermon, after reproving the vices of the people, he assailed those of the clergy, and especially the dignitaries of the Church of Rome. "Popes," he says, "have attained, through the most shameful simony and subtlety, the highest priestly dignities, and even then, when seated in the holy chair, surrender themselves to a shamefully voluptuous life and an insatiable avarice. The cardinals and bishops follow their example. No discipline, no fear of God is in them. Many believe in no God. The chastity of the cloister is slain, and they who should serve God with holy zeal have become cold or lukewarm. The princes openly exercise tyranny. Their subjects encourage them in their evil propensities, their robberies, their adulteries, their sacrileges. But, after the corrupted human race has abused for so many centuries the long-suffering of God, then at last the justice of God appears, demanding that the rulers of the people, who with base examples corrupt all the rest, should be brought to heavy punishment, and that the people of Asia and Africa, now dwelling in the darkness of ignorance, should be made partakers of the light."*

About 1490 or 1491 Savonarola preached a series of sermons, nineteen in number, in the Duomo of Florence, on the First Epistle of St. John; the most spiritual and admirable for doctrine and unction, perhaps, of all the discourses of Savonarola.

And in 1493, in Advent, he preached twenty-five sermons on the Psalm "Quam Bonus Israel Deus," &c., in the church of St. Maria del Fiore in the same city, and of the same character, as to excellence of doctrine and of Christian eloquence, as the former series.

* Ap. Eng. Biog. of Sav.

Both these collections were re-published in Florence, in 1846, in 1 vol. 8vo., the first of an intended series of his works. The volume has been suppressed, and the work discontinued. From a copy in my possession, the following extracts are taken from the first series of sermons preached in the Duomo from the text of St. John.

"*Ecce magi ab oriente,*" *&c.*—Matt. ii.

"Behold the Lord Jesus! He is not to-day an infant in the manger, but great in majesty in heaven. He has taught; He has done miracles; He has been crucified, and has risen from the dead. He sits at the right hand of the Father; He has sent His Holy Spirit into the world; He has sent the Apostles; He has subjugated the nations, and his Vicar has accepted the empire of Rome; and behold, now are all things prepared; and he has sent his servants forth, saying, Behold, I have prepared my banquet, my bullock, and the fatted animals are killed, and all things are prepared, come to the wedding feast. Behold, the doors of heaven are opened, and the paths have been trod of old; and the apostles have walked in them, and the confessors, and the holy virgins, and all the fathers. Come then to the eternal espousals!

"But you, Christian born, and nurtured among Catholics, who have been baptized and nourished with the gospel, fortified with many sacraments, and strengthened in the faith with many sermons; now, when every idolatry is destroyed, when light is now shed over the word, and the dark clouds scattered, that you, in the midst (of the influences) of the Holy Scriptures, surrounded by brightness of the eternal light, how is it I say, that you do not come to adore Jesus, with a great faith, full of fervour?

"You have not to come from the east to adore him, yet it is a trouble to you to come to him from a little distance. You cannot leave your riches, you cannot endure the toil (of seeking him), you are fearful of danger. But you have not to go Jerusalem to seek him. Now have we the kingdom of heaven everywhere; but you have grown indolent, and all fatigue is disagreeable to

you. You are ashamed to follow the footsteps of Christ, who now reigns in heaven.

"You do not esteem it a great matter to serve Him—quite the contrary; and your works show that you are not a Christian. You have already broken your baptismal vows; you have trodden the blood of Christ under foot; you are a rebel to his law; and your promises (of allegiance to it) serve for nothing.

"How have you renounced the devil and his pomps, you, who every day do his works! you do not attend to the laws of Christ, but to the literature of the Gentiles. Behold the Magi have abandoned paganism and come to Christ, and you, having abandoned Christ, run to paganism. You have left the manna and the bread of angels, and you have sought to satiate your appetite with the food that is fit for swine. Every day avarice augments, and the vortex of usury is enlarged. Luxury has contaminated everything; pride ascends even to the clouds; blasphemies pierce the ears of heaven, and scoffing takes place in the very face of God. You (who act thus) are of the devil, who is your father, and you seek to do the will of your father. Behold those who are worse than the Jews, and yet to us belong the Sacred Scriptures which speak against them.... Many are the blind who say our times are more felicitous than the past ages, but I think if the Holy Scriptures are true, our lives are not only not like those of our fathers of former times, but they are at variance with them.... Cast your eyes on Rome, which is the chief city of the world, and lower your regards to all her members, and lo! from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, no sanity is there.

"We are in the midst of Christians, we converse with Christians, but they are not Christians, who are so only in name; far better would it be in the midst of pagans.... For now men have become lovers of themselves; covetous, haughty, proud, profane, disobedient to father and mother, ungrateful, given to ribaldry, without love, without peace, censorious, incontinent, spiteful, without benignity, treacherous persons, deceivers, puffed up,

lovers of voluptuousness more than of God, *who have the form of righteousness, but who deny the value of it.*"*

On the preaching and teaching of the time.

Exposition of the psalm "*Quam Bonus Israel Deus,*" *&c.*

"There are questions which are of no utility to an audience, but which rather are productive of ridicule and contention. The good teacher of the people should always aim at utility, and fly from unprofitable disputations; but now it is altogether the reverse. Those who write and preach, propose only questions and subtleties, and curious speculations, which gratify a little the ear of the hearers, but to the sick soul do no good; do not move it to contrition, do not enlighten it on matters necessary to salvation, do not heal the wounds inflicted by sin, do not resuscitate it from death. It seems to me that the doctors of the church, and the preachers of our times, are like the musicians and the singers who were in the house of the Master of the Synagogue, whose daughter was lying dead, who sung and played plaintive, mournful airs, and caused lugubrious sounds to be heard, in order to incite people more to express lamentation, but they did not resuscitate the dead girl. Thus are the doctors and preachers of our times. They are continually in the presence of souls without life, and they imagine they can resuscitate them alone with their questions and subtleties, and beautiful similitudes and their authorities;—Aristotle, Virgil, Ovid and others, in the excellent strains of Dante and Petrarca, and they have no success. Oh, what lugubrious death-songs do they make, and yet not only the dead are not resuscitated, but very often the living soul is slain. But our Saviour entering the house of the Master of the Synagogue, and seeing those musical performers and the tumultuous crowd, immediately he sent them forth, and with his disciples resuscitated the dead. . . . .

"But not like those (fathers of the church of yore) are the modern doctors and theologians, who have great genius, and are spoken of in Scripture as '*videns Dominum.*' They ought to

* Sermon the 17th of Savonarola, on 1st Epist. of St. John, ap. Prediche di Fra Gir. Savonarola, 8vo. *Fir.* 1845, tome unico, p. 167, *et seq.*

know and to fear God, and yet they have the intellect obscure, and full of falsity; and therefore it is written, Israel autem mi non intellexit. And why have they not heard me, says God, nor known me? But they have been the ruin of my people, because they did not know how to teach the way of truth, but rather they praised their flocks, and said, Oh my people, how much good have I not done for you! and to what an extent are you devout? You have many relics, many hospitals, many monasteries; you make many processions, and many feasts. Your people then have to return thanks to God. I have never found a city so very well ordered in matters appertaining to the divine worship, so given to charity elsewhere. And thus, alas! do they go about praising and deceiving the people. *Populi meus qui te beatum dicunt ipsi te decipiunt.* They do not teach you how to live, how you ought to suffer trials and crosses with patience; they do not take away the doubts that sometimes spring up in your minds, respecting the providence of God, when they see the good suffer sorrows, and the wicked exalted, because they do not find in their books, devoid of spiritual influences, nor in their science or their philosophy, the determination and resolution of questions and difficulties of this kind.". *

In the 15th sermon on the psalm "Quam Bonus Israel Deus," one of the most remarkable of the parables of Savonarola is to be found, in which the imagery, for its sublimity, is hardly exceeded by any similar poetic picture of Dante. "*Veri autem adoratores adorabant in spiritu et veritate.*"

"Considering, most beloved in Jesus Christ, the felicity of the Saints who have preceded us, and bewailing the sight of the dissipation of every Christian principle, and of men being led away from the old paths of our fathers, behold there appeared before my eyes a beautiful woman, of a venerable and a gracious aspect.

"And I said to her, 'Who are you, who thus unexpectedly appear before me?' And she answered, '*Ego mater pulchræ dilectionis, timoris, agnitionis et Sanctæ spei.*' Then I took confi-

* Sermon the 7th of Sav. on the Psalm "*Quam bonus.*"—Ib. pp. 271, 273.

dence, and said, 'Tell me, O Madonna, (the incarnate wisdom, *sapienzia incarnato,*) how comes it to pass that the Christian people no longer can endure the burden of the mild law of Christ, the light and easy yoke of charity and love, as the saints of old did?' 'Hear the reason,' she replied; '*Quia puer est et non habet vires.* The Christian people to-day may be likened to a child which has not strength to bear without repining the smallest burden.' 'Then,' said I, 'how am I to do, that I may have sufficient force to bear it, and that it may seem light to me?' She answered, 'I will teach you—Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, et ut sigillum super brachium tuum. This will be the great strength of a people.'

"And when she thus spoke to me, I saw suddenly approach me Death, armed with his scythe; and the sight of him caused me great terror. And, with daring boldness, he said, 'I am stronger than that sign (you were told to place on your heart, and as a seal on your arm), for no human being ever has been able to resist my power, or offer any resistance to it. With this scythe I have cut down all on earth who came before me, popes, emperors, and kings, and no one has overcome me, so be on your guard that you have not been deluded with mere words.'

"I felt somewhat astounded, amazed as it were, at these words; but the lady (she the mother of fair love) said to me, '*Fortis est ut mors dilectio,*' and instantly Death departed.

"No sooner were the words spoken, than Satan, in form and stature of stupendous and appalling size and aspect, stood before me and said, 'I am the strongest of all powers; for of me it is written, *Non est potestas in terra quæ ei comparetur.* So suffer not yourself to be deceived by others. I have caused many saints to fall, and, among the rest, your first father Adam, who was more perfect and of greater virtue than all the others.'

"Speedily that lady, most worthy of veneration, encouragingly said to me, 'Fear him not—*Nam dura sicut infernus æmulatio.*'

"Then came a third apparition, a body of fire like unto a great furnace, and it appeared as if it was there, to burn me. And I heard a great voice issue out of that furnace and fire,

amidst the flames, saying, '*Ego fortissima consumens omnia.* I am most potent, and I consume all things. I have burned cities and castles in great numbers; I have consumed multitudes of men, which (ravages) if you only knew, you would be less confident in the power of this protectress.'

"I stood rapt in wonder, and I said, 'What does all this mean?' Then did the lady take me by the arm and by the hand, and, smiling, turning towards the body of fire, she said, '*Lampades ejus ut lampades ignis atque flammorum.*' These words having been spoken, I perceived a great stir and a sound of rushing waters, as of a vast impetuous river when the streams come down in rapid torrents from the mountains, and I heard a voice from the midst of the waters, which said to me, 'We have overwhelmed cities and brought down mountains, and we have no dread of armies, and therefore you are deceived if you think that a woman's aid can serve to liberate you from our hands.'

"'Oh, mother and queen!' I exclaimed, 'answer for me;' and instantly, before she could respond, I heard a loud tumultuous noise and great booming sounds, such as those which we hear when the sea is lashed by tempests; and there came forth a most terrible voice, and spoke thus to me: 'I am the sea which has swallowed up numberless ships and submerged innumerable people, and once overspread even the wide world, and no one can stand against the power of the Devil; and yet you confide in the vain words of a woman.' Then encouragingly did this lady speak to me, and, directing her words against the sea and against the rivers, she said, '*Aquæ multæ non potuerunt extinguere charitatem, neque flumina obruent illum.*' At these words I was much reassured.

"And then, behold, the world appeared before me with all the precious and desirable things, and all the pleasures that could be imagined here below. In one place there seemed to me songs and most sweet sounds of music; in another, children exquisitely beautiful; elsewhere, tables most sumptuously laid out with a variety of viands and wines; here, apartments,

magnificently adorned; there, were seen royal sceptres, imperial crowns, and papal mitres. At the sight of these things I felt myself somewhat encouraged *and drawn forcibly towards them;* and chiefly when I heard a voice uttering these words, '*Hæc omnia tibi dabo si cadens adoraveris me;*' and another, which said, '*Omnia traho ad me ipsum.*'

"This lady (the mother of fair love), fearing that I might yield to the temptation of such delights, said to me, "Be resolute, I have better things to offer you; *Nam si dedent homo omnem substanstiam domus suæ per dilectionem quasi nihil despiciet eam.*' Thus it is, my brethren, this love and this charity (which I have to propose to you) are great gifts, and far more precious than all earthly and material goods, and nothing can prevail against them, as you shall see. For the due understanding of this parable, *questo parabolo,* it must be borne in mind, that it is in the intellectual part, as our experience shews (that such impressions are made), when one understands anything, and it occasions in the intellect of the person a certain impression of the similitude of the thing understood, and in a like manner, in the imagination remains the similitude of the thing imagined. . . .

"In the love then of Jesus Christ is that impression or similitude (which has been referred to), and not only in the intellect, but in the will or desire, which if it be naturally affected, produces much sensible emotion, but if supernaturally by grace, oh then the soul is effectually moved by it!

"For the supernatural light which impresses Christ in the understanding, vehemently draws to it the will or desire, for it shews the Saviour to the understanding, by some medium of ineffable suavity, which the natural light cannot present it in (to the intellect). And the more the desire is thus acted on, the more is it animated by this supernatural charity."*

It cannot fail to strike every reader of the works of Ascetic writers, how the denunciation of universal iniquity becomes a ruling passion, how a conviction of impending judgments seems to get possession of the minds of moralists and

* Sermon of Savonarola on the love of Jesus Christ, the 14th of the series on the Psalm "*Quam Bonus,*"—Ibid. p. 421, *et seq.*

the evils of their times so entirely absorb their attention, that they generalise calamities, and are apt to become forgetful of many exceptions, to the rule of prevailing degeneracy and corruption.

In the spirit of Jeremiah, their lamentations are poured forth continuously; but without derogating from the sanctity or doubting the sincerity of Gildas, or Fra Girolamo, it may be permitted to doubt if all religion had utterly perished in England, in the days of Gildas; if all its ministers, with the exception of "the mourner," had become faithless and unprofitable servants of Christ, and if the same lamentable results had taken place in Italy, some centuries later, in the days of Savonarola, though it is very certain at both epochs, in both countries, the calamities of the Church were numerous and terrible.

But in judging of the events recorded in history, we have to consider not only the fair intentions of the writer towards truth, but the style of his composition, and his mode of viewing particular subjects in which he takes a deep interest, and the medium through which he looks at them.

This observation may apply to the following extract from the 23rd sermon of the series of expositions of the psalm *Quam Bonus*, wherein he descants on "the destruction of the Christian people, by the example of bad rulers of the Church," and the decay of spirituality in the service of religion.

"Now there is one thing only, in which great delight is taken in the temple of religion. The great anxiety is, that it should be all painted and gilded; thus, our churches have exterior things, many fine ceremonies in the solemnization of ecclesiastical offices, with magnificent adornments for the altars and hangings for the walls, candelabra of gold and silver, so many costly chalices, and ciboriums. You behold there those great prelates with fine mitres, adorned with gold and precious gems, on their heads, with crosiers of silver. You behold them with brocaded vestments at the altar, singing our beautiful vespers and our high masses, *adagio*, with so many imposing ceremonies, organs and numerous singers, that your senses are

astounded; and they seem to you men of great gravity and sanctimony, and you do not believe they can err, but that which they say and do, is to be observed as the precepts of the gospel; behold to what a pass the modern church is come!*

"Men nurture themselves on these trivialities, and recreate themselves with these ceremonies, and they say the church of Jesus Christ never flourished so much, and that divine worship was never so well performed as at the present time; as a great prelate once said, that the church was never held in such honour, nor were their prelates ever in such estimation, and the first prelates of the church were only *prelatuzzi*, in comparison with the bishops of our days.

"But Asaph (of the Psalms), how does he feel at hearing these words? He whispers in my ear and says, 'It is true the first prelates were only *prelatuzzi*, because they were humble and poor, and they had not so many fat bishoprics, and so many rich glebe possessions, as our modern bishops. They had not so many mitres of gold, moreover, nor so many chalices, and even the few which they possessed, they disposed of for the necessities of the poor. Our prelates, to possess chalices, take the substance of the poor, without which they cannot live.'

"But do you comprehend what I wish to say to you?

"*In the primitive church, the chalices were of wood and the prelates were of gold; to-day, the prelates are of wood, and the chalices are of gold.*

"It was said once to St. Thomas of Aquinas, by a great prelate, and perhaps it might be said of all who entertain similar opinions, that he exhibited a large vessel, and perhaps more than one, full of ducats, and said, 'Master Thomas, look here, the church can no longer say as St. Peter said, *Argentum et aurum non est mihi.*' St. Thomas, in reply, said, 'Neither can the church say now that which follows immediately, and was said by the

* It must be borne in mind that Savonarola's "Modern Church" was the church of the year 1492, that had the calamity of having Alexander the Sixth for its ruler.

Apostle—*In nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi Nazareni surge et ambula.*'

"They who did these things were then only *prelatuzzi*, as far as temporalities go, but they were great prelates, that is to say, of great virtue and sanctity, great authority; they were greatly reverenced by the people; whether on account of their virtues, or of the miracles they performed. . . . .

"If you go to those prelati cerimoniosi (of later times), they give you the best mild words you ever heard; if you condole with them on the present state of the church, that it is bad, speedily they say, 'Father, you speak the truth, it will be impossible any longer to live, if God does not repair the evil the faith is suffering.' But internally they are full of malice, and they speak another language, and they say, '*Let us remain at rest, all days are feasts of the Lord on earth:*' as if they wished to say, 'Let us make the feasts and solemnities of God, festivals and functions of the devil; let us introduce them,' they say, 'with our authority, with an example, so that the true feasts and solemnities of God shall cease, and the festivals of Satan shall be honoured.' And they say one to another, 'What think you of this our faith? what opinion have you of it?' Another replies, 'You appear to me a fool. That which has been said (of calamities in the church) is a dream, a thing spoken of by women and of friars, *e uno sogno, e cosa da femminucce, e da frati.* . . . . che fai tu adunque Signore? perche dormi tu? 'Quare abdormis Domine? exurge, et ne repellas in finem.' . . . . Lord, do you not see our tribulations? Have you become unmindful of your church? Do you love it no more? Is it no longer dear to you? It is still your spouse! Do you not recognise it? It is the same for which you came down from heaven, and took up your abode in the womb of Mary; for which you took human flesh, for which you suffered all manner of opprobrium, for which you were pleased to shed your blood on the cross. Therefore, since it has cost you so much, O Lord, we beseech of you that you come speedily to liberate it. . . . ."*

* Prediche e Sermoni di Sav. pp. 570, *et seq. Fir.* 1845.

Fra Girolamo was accustomed to repeat his reprehensions of prevailing vices, and his inculcations of important truths, over and over in his sermons, and frequently in the same powerful language. He seemed to have an idea that it was not sufficient to enunciate great and important truths, but that it was necessary to familiarize not only the understanding with these topics, but the ears with the very sound of their enunciation.

In one of his sermons, referring to the mission given to him, and the duties it imposed upon him, he speaks of the missionary of truth as "The hammer of the Lord," sent to beat down sin—to strike on the anvil of the sinful heart—to give stroke after stroke till the Lord's work was done, and there was no more need for the hammer.

His labours in the pulpit were unceasing. No sooner was one series of sermons on a particular subject, book, or letter of the sacred Scriptures concluded than another commenced. The labours in the Duomo have no sooner ended, than they begin in the Reparata. "The hammer of the Lord is again striking on the anvil of iniquity: blow after blow falls in quick succession. The same sounds are heard over and over again, '*Penitentiam agite, agite penitentiam*'—do penance! oh, do penance! now is the acceptable time; do not defer it longer, thinking that the Lord will wait for you, and call you again to him.

"Hearken to my words, not as if they were merely mine, but as proceeding from God. I cannot do otherwise than speak them to you, '*Agite Penitentiam,*' come and see how good the Lord is! how merciful he is!....

"Oh, ye rich! oh, ye poor! do penance! You who are rich, give alms to the poor! You who (are in poverty and suffering) fear God, act well, and have no dread on account of your tribulations!....

"Oh, priests, hear my words! Oh, pastors and prelates of the church of Christ, leave the benefices which you cannot justly hold! Abandon your pomp, your banquets, and your costly entertainments! Abandon, I counsel you, your *vicious courses*, for the time is come, I say, to do penance for them!...

"Oh, monks, abandon all superfluities of apparel, and of property belonging to your monasteries and their endowments. Betake yourselves to simplicity of life, and labour for it with your hands, as did the monks of old, your fathers and our predecessors. Otherwise, your failing to do this, it will be done for you by Christ, with a strong hand. Oh, monks, abandon at once your evil courses—leave off your simony, when you receive those who come into your monasteries to remain there.

"See that with all your iniquities our work endures, thanks to Him by whose power it progresses. It is Christ who defends our work. I said to my Lord, 'I abandon everything to you. It is your work. I am but the instrument in your hands.' And he responded to me, 'Leave me to act; I will deal with them as with the Jews, who thought to have overthrown my work because they had me put to death on the cross, and nevertheless that act was the means which I employed to cause my name to be known throughout the world.'

"Oh, ye merchants! abandon your usury, make restitution for the gains illicitly obtained, and the wrongs done to others, otherwise you will lose all that you possess.....

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness says to you, 'Oh, Italy, on account of your sins, adversity will come on you! Oh, all ye cities of Italy, the time is coming for the punishment of your sins! Oh, Italy, on account of your luxury, your avarice, your pride, your ambition, your rapine and injustice, many afflictions will befall you, many scourges will come on you!' A voice in the wilderness crying out, thus speaks to you, &c., Agite Penitentiam! Agite Penitentiam!"*

In a letter from Machiavelli, dated the 8th of March, 1497, the writer, then at Florence, gives an account of two of the sermons of Savonarola, in which he speaks of the spiritual man and his discourses as might be expected of the worldly man, astute politician, and diplomatist, namely, disparagingly and sarcastically. Machiavelli's sneers at spiritual things did not, however, eventually even satisfy himself that his reason had

* Sermon preached by Savonarola in Florence, 1st Nov. 1794.

approved the opinions he expressed in his letter. In some of his later works, and in one of his best poems, he has spoken of Savonarola with respect and even admiration.

Bayle has made a collection of all the slanders of any mark and note which have been heaped on Fra Girolamo, and has dignified his labour with the title of a critical examination into the predictions of the friar.

He observes, that the Florentines, counting on Savonarola's alleged prediction of the return of Charles the Eighth, wasted their means and exceedingly impoverished themselves by reason of the expense they were at, from an earnest desire to recover Pisa, and the other places which they had delivered to the king of France, among which places Pisa was then in the hands of the Venetians.

"This may induce us," says Bayle, "to believe that Savonarola foretold the return of Charles the Eighth in a precise and absolute manner; for if he had only foretold it as a thing probable, and grounded himself on this, viz. that God required and threatened to punish the king if it was not executed, he would not have inspired the Florentines with so much confidence.

"It is then very likely, that he promised to them absolutely, as a certain fact, the second expedition of Charles the Eighth; but that in addressing himself to that prince, he did not hold the same language, but only gave him to understand, that it was the will of God he should return into Italy, and, in case of failure, denounced against him the indignation and the severe judgments of his Creator. He found no better way than this, to verify the prophecies which he gave out at Florence. Philip de Comines, who was better acquainted with affairs of state than with the intrigues of prediction-makers, did not distinguish these two springs, or this duplicity of language; he confounded the one with the other, and supposes that the monk added an *if* in his sermons, as he did in his letters; which is contrary to all likelihood. It is proper to observe, that if this prophet had been very sure in the matter, he would not have denounced these terrible judgments of God to Charles the Eighth; for in

so doing, he believed it possible for that monarch not to make the second expedition. How then durst he foretel it, and say that God had revealed it to him? When God reveals that such a thing will happen, is it in the power of man to hinder it from coming to pass? Can they choose any measures that will prevent it? Is it necessary to threaten them with some misfortune in case they should make it miscarry? Let us conclude that the threatenings used with Charles the Eighth, and the certainty of the revelation touching his return into Italy, are things which can never be reconciled by any wise man. If you should answer, that these threatenings were to serve as the means to bring about the event, and that therefore they were no sign of Savonarola's uncertainty, I will deny the fact; for Charles the Eighth did not return into Italy, and consequently the threatenings of that monk were not one of the means which God had fore-ordained to that end. Turn yourself which way you will, you can never disprove his being a false prophet in this point. He puts me in mind of the Drabicius's and Knottorus's of our days, people that begun by wishing earnestly for the ruin of the emperor, and who proceeded by foretelling it, afterwards by looking everywhere round for a prince able to procure it; and last of all, by signifying to that prince that he was predestinated to that great work, and that if he did not set about it, God would punish him severely. There is sometimes more of malice than enthusiasm in this proceeding, a war is only aimed at; for, as a man very well skilled in these artifices said, it is certain that prophecies, whether supposed or true, have often inspired the persons for whom they were made, with the design of undertaking the things that were promised to them. . .

"I shall make another reflection on the narrative of Philip de Comines. This author is too ready to help Savonarola out with the accomplishments of his predictions. He verifies the threatenings of that monk in the death of the dauphin, and in that of Charles the Eighth. They were loose threatenings, and did not much expose him; for that prince might meet with vexations from a hundred quarters, and more easily than persons

of a private condition; so that one risked nothing at all in threatening him with some misfortune. A prophet has nothing to fear when he keeps to such generalities. He may even save himself by a back door, in case the princes whom he threatens should fall into no affliction: he may say, that such long prosperity is a judgment from God, that it hinders them from minding their salvation, as they would have done in adversity. Comines is too charitable and good natured; he might have very well excused himself from making the applications. This fault has produced others; there are writers who have very falsely stated they had his authority for saying that Savonarola prophesied that the king of France would not long survive the Dauphin. Spizelius among the number. "Neque inficias tamen ire Cominæus potuit Savonarolam multa verè predixisse, et quibus nemo mortalium potuisset admonere, Nam et Regi inquit, fore prædixit ut extincto filio ipse quoque non diu superesset."

"Sleidan is perhaps the cause of the error which I have just taken notice of; for thus he has translated the end of the passage of Philip de Comines. Nam et Regi prædixit fore ut extincto filio, ipse quoque non diu superesset atque has illius ad regem literas, ipse legi."

"Nothing could be more unfair than this translation; it does not at all answer to the words of the original: Et touchant le Roy et les maux qu'il dit luy devoir advenir, luy est advenu ce que vous voiez, qui feut premier la mort de son fils; puis la sienne, et j'ay veu des lettres qu'il escrivoit au dit sigheur.

"The translation has so confounded things, that it directly and formally ascribes to the prophet what is no more than a pure comment of the historian. Besides, it affirms that the historian had seen the letters which contained that pretended prediction; but Comines only says that he had seen some letters from Savonarola to the king. To make a faithful translation, it should have been expressed thus: Et quidem quoad Regem mala ipsi contigerunt quæ is eventura dixerat, quod ipsimet cernitis, nempe primo obitus filii, ac deinde ipsius Regis. Nonnullas vidi epistolas supradicto Principi ab eo scriptas. This sim-

plicity without elegance is much better than a fine Latin style, which corrupts the sense of the original.

"Here follows a third reflection. The event has proved that Charles the Eighth was not chosen by God to reform the church by the sword, and to drive the tyrants out of Italy. He no ways reformed the church: historians mark his expedition as one of the eras of the greatest calamities of Italy; and it is certain that no advantage accrued from it to that part of the world. What else can be concluded from this, but that the monk was deceived in his pretended revelations? He did not see farther than another into the decrees of God; but he had the confidence to boast that he knew them.

"Let it not be alleged that if Charles the Eighth had reformed the Church by his sword, and caused his soldiers to oberve an exact discipline, Savonarola's predictions would have had their full accomplishment. These are idle evasions. When God predestinates to the end, he likewise predestinates to the means: so that if the means of restoring to the church her primitive form, and to Italy her liberty, had dopended on the sword of Charles the Eighth, and on the good discipline of his troops, that prince would have been predestinated to these means, and if so, he would have put them in execution, for nothing can hinder the decrees of God. It is then false that Providence had pitched upon him for this work; and consequently, Savonarola, who affirmed it, ought to be looked upon as a false prophet in this respect.

"I shall not repeat what has been said elsewhere in answer to the evasions and subterfuges of those who, after not succeeding in their predictions, lay the fault to the sins of men. If these sins were to hinder the event, there was no decree in heaven concerning the existence of that thing: for which reason every man who foretold that it would come to pass, was mistaken; and if he had been truly inspired, he would have known the real obstacles that would happen, and not the pretended existence of what was not to happen.

"I do not know what authority Varillas had for saying that when there was a dearth at Florence, it did no service to Savo-

narola that he had foretold it; that, on the contrary, the Florentines were so much the more offended at his not having applied a proper remedy. They would not have been altogether in the wrong, for he governed the whole city; and if he was obliged as a prophet to foretel the barrenness of the earth, as director of the affairs of state, he was obliged to provide supplies of corn; otherwise his prediction was to no purpose.

"I must not omit that his conversation with Philip de Comines has been ill related by Varillas, who has not only tacked to it extravagant additions and enlargements, but likewise an intolerable falsity, viz. that Savonarola affirmed that Charles the Eighth would not return into Italy. . . .

"Philip de Comines serves as a witness to those who censure Savonarola. This will appear from a passage of —— Gabriel Naudè.* 'Since all the praises which have hitherto been bestowed upon that person are to be ascribed either to the affection of his friends and followers, or to the artifice and subtlety of heretics, who would gladly make him more zealous than St. Paul, more learned than St. Augustine, and more eloquent than St. Chrysostom, because they appropriate him to themselves; I reckon that in order to judge of him with more reason and equity, we may in the first place say of the predictions which brought him into such vogue and esteem, that so far were they from being occasioned by a divine enthusiasm, like those of the prophets, and of many other saints and favourites of God, that, on the contrary, they have been almost every one false, as appears in his having affirmed that Charles the Eighth would come a second time into Italy, that the person who should grasp at the dominion of Florence would come to a miserable end, that John Picus would recover of the illness of which he died two days after, and in many more of his prophecies, still more vain, which are amply deduced and told in the book that John Poggius wrote upon the falsity of them: and that if any of them proved true, it must be owned that this happened either by chance, or because he had private information given him of what was to be done by a great number of friends that he had

* Apologie des Grandes Hommes Accusees de Magie. pp. 455 *et seq.*

in the council of the Florentines, and in that of the king of France. Lastly, as to what concerns the rest of his actions, we may truly judge by these that he was a very great politician, dignified sometimes with the most honourable employments, and endowed with such a ready and persuasive eloquence, that he may justly be compared to those ancient orators who had no less dominion and influence upon popular and democratical states, than the winds have upon the sea; keeping them at pleasure in the calm of peace, or in the storms of war, making them roll sometimes one way and sometimes another, turning them upside down, and, in short, managing them at pleasure, and to the tune of their discourses. Savonarola may boast of having done this for above the space of *ten* years at Florence, although he likewise made use of his revelations, and of his counterfeit and dissembled piety to keep up his credit and reputation so long, knowing, from the examples of Arius and Mahomet, that the respect of religion has an extreme influence upon our minds; and that when once a man has got the fame of living holily, he makes the people believe what he pleases, especially if he be endowed with a graceful delivery and an uncommon eloquence.* Naude concludes, that it was easy for Savonarola to bear rule at Florence; 'quando,' as Jovius, in speaking of him, has very well observed, 'nihil validius esset ad persuadendum, specie ipsa pietatis, in qua etiam tuendæ libertatis studium emineret.' . . . .

"Since there is not a more powerful instrument of persuasion than a show of piety, in which also a great zeal for the support of liberty is conspicuous.

"Take notice," says Bayle, "if you please, that he, Naudè, might have found in Philip de Comines another proof of Savonarola's illusions, and do not forget what he observes, touching the information which that prophet could receive from the court of France, and the council of the Florentines. This was no bad method of foretelling. It has been said, that there were confessors, who revealed to him the secrets of their penitents, and

* Apol. de Grandes Hommes Accuses de Magie.

that he owned it in prison. Another good way of making it thought that he had revelations from above."*

Bayle then proceeds to the account of Burchard in his diary, of the alleged confessions made by Savonarola under torture, and after its infliction, as unobjectionable evidence?

But he has not one word of reprehension for the mode of procuring the alleged confession, nor one syllable of comment on the terms of Burchard, which conclude his circumstantial account of Savonarola's confession of a long career of imposture and hypocrisy, "*as it is affirmed.*" All the critical acumen of Bayle departs from him, when the career of a devout monk, firmly believing in Christianity, and in the tenets of his church, comes under consideration.

As I give this account of Burchard, with other portions of his journal relative to the ordeal, and the condemnation and execution of Savonarola, elsewhere, I omit Bayle's reference to this particular account of Burchard.

Let us take it for granted, that Savonarola's revelations were statements only of strong impressions made on his imagination; that his visions were mere dreams; that his raptures were results of concentrated feelings of devotion and aspirations of a mind profoundly contemplative; that his prophetic power was an exalted poetic influence; his predictions inspirations only of genius of the highest order. It does not follow that he was an impostor, a fanatic, or a fool.

Byron speaks of the seemingly prophetic power of Dante. Mariotti observes of the author of the Divina Commedia, "The notion that his strains would go down to posterity as a second Apocalypse, seems to lurk in every one of his verses. His own images worked upon his brain, till they became inspired truth in his own eyes. The long contemplation of his subject, had led to an actual apotheosis of his own mind. He had soared so far upward, that the more ethereal substance of his spirit never found its way back again. The most earnest of all poetic minds, he saw and touched what other poets only could invent. His

* Bayle's Crit. Dict. vol. v, p. 63.

contact with divine things was closer than human nature could attain, without great spirituality. His insight into the sublimest matters was an intuitive perception."* In those glimpses of transcendent truths, which on divers occasions seemed to have been accorded to Savonarola, it is in vain to look for accompanying evidences of imposture in his demeanour, deportment, or conduct in his cloister, or in conversation with man.

In fine, by one test alone the character of the Writings and Sermons of Savonarola may be distinguished—an all-pervading spirit of piety towards God, of compassion towards mankind, united with a profound conviction of the depths of the misery into which human nature has fallen, and the height of the excellence to which it is capable of being elevated by the grace of God. In every work of Savonarola these great sentiments are found embodied, and are always remarkable for the piety which pervades them. In the writings of other moralists and reformers, who have dealt with ecclesiastical abuses, traces of such sentiments may be found scattered through different disquisitions, but seldom in so connected a form, and so wholly free from contradictions.

The opinions of some Protestant historians and polemical writers of Savonarola being a declared enemy or impugner of the doctrines of his church, such as Bayle, Wolfius, Beza, Verheiden, Du Plessis Mornai, are disposed of in a remarkable pasaage of an eminent Dominican, Coeffeteau, in reference to this subject.

"He that desires to see Savonarola's doctrine defended against those who accused him of heresy, let him read the learned apology which Thomas Neri, a Florentine monk of his order, wrote for him; and particularly as to what concerns the article of justification, which Du Plessis does most of all insist upon, let him read the answer to the first objection, and he will know that never any man spoke more like a Catholic than he, nor in a manner more agreeable to the doctrine of the Church of Rome" . . . . "Such reason is there to believe that he died a

* Mariotti, ap. The Great Cities of the Middle Ages, by T. A. Buckley, B.A. p. 157. 12mo. *London*, 1853.

catholic, and here follows the account which his great friend the learned Prince of Mirandola gives of the matter.

"Savonarola," says he, "having notice given him of his being condemned to die, called immediately for a priest to whom he might confess his sins, and desired to receive the most holy communion, which being brought to him, he begged earnestly that they would allow him to take and hold the sacrament between his hands; and this being granted to him, he began to say, with great cheerfulness and devotion, that he knew and was assured that therein was the great and true God, the fountain of supreme goodness, and the maker of heaven and earth, and of all creatures: that he knew for certain that therein also was present the most holy, indivisible, and inseparable Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, &c. Do you think, Mr. du Plessis, that a Lutheran or Calvinist would have died in this manner, and made such a confession of faith? Let your Beza therefore take him from among the idols of your party: let not Luther call upon him any more, as a voucher for his opinions, and as for you, do not persist in making him a heretic contrary to his own confession. Certain it is, that if he had been such, neither Picus Mirandola, nor Marsilius Ficinus, nor Neri, nor so many other famous men, who have always lived in the communion of the Church of Rome, would have taken it into their heads to celebrate his praise, even after his death. But with what face can you reckon among the Lutherans and Calvinists a monk who lived continually in his cloister, strictly observing his vows, and so earnestly exhorting his brethren to do the like, that he appeared to be superstitious in his way of life? With what face can you reckon among the Lutherans and Calvinists a monk who constantly celebrated the holy sacrifice of the mass, and who has even written books to explain the mysteries of it, and to teach us how we must partake of the fruit which God communicates to us therein? How can people place in the list of Lutherans or Calvinists, a man that always believed in the seven sacraments of the church, always invoked the saints, and always prayed for the dead whom he believed to be in purga-

tory? Let any one take the pains to read Savonarola's books, and if he does not find there all that I have been saying of him, I am willing to pass for a calumniator. What if he had some particular opinions? We do not call people heretics who only err, but such as join obstinacy to error. To conclude, it was not for having groaned under the heavy load of abuses after a reformation, that he was burnt: but his greatest crime was a state crime, inasmuch as he preached in a Republic that was divided into factions, the most powerful of which, being opposed by him, put him to death as a seditious person."*

Savonarola has been given up by several Roman Catholic writers as a reformer who had abandoned the tenets of his church. But Mr. Macaulay is not of their opinion.

"There was among the Italians," says Macaulay, "both much piety and much impiety; but, with very few exceptions, neither the piety nor the impiety took the turn of Protestantism. The religious Italians desired a reform of morals and discipline, but not a reform of doctrine, and least of all a schism. The irreligious Italians simply disbelieved Christianity, without hating it. They looked at it as artists, or as statesmen; and, so looking at it, they liked it better in the established form than in any other. It was to them what the old Pagan worship was to Trajan and Pliny. Neither the spirit of Savonarola nor the spirit of Machiavelli had any thing in common with the spirit of the religious or political Protestants of the North."†

In an American periodical devoted to Roman Catholic literature and polemics, conducted with great ability, Brownson's Quarterly Review for April, 1852, there is an article on Paganism in Education, p. 228, referring to Savonarola in a way utterly inconsistent with an intimate knowledge of his writings, and of his life and labours, and unworthy of the high character of the editor of that journal. The editor, criticising, in his customary shrewd but very dogmatic style, the opinions of the Abbé Gaume on his work "Le ver rongeur des societès Modernes ou de Paganisme,

* Coeffeteau, Reponse au Mystere d'Iniquitè, p. 1217.
† Macaulay, Ed. Rev. on Ranke's Lives of the Popes.

dans l'Education," where the evil of placing works of pagan literature, with all licentiousness and heathenish sensuality, in the hands of Christian youth for educational purposes, are very forcibly pointed out, observes :—

"All these theorizings as to the causes of past calamities, and all these specifics for the cure of prevailing evils, are ever to be received with suspicion. They all proceed on the assumption that these calamities might have been prevented, and that these evils might have been removed by human foresight, wisdom, and strength ; and hence it is, that these authors soon forget the supernatural agency of heaven, because proud in their own conceit, impatient of instruction, and, like Savonarola, like the ill-fated Lamennais, like the brilliant Abbatè Gioberti, end in losing their faith and their virtue, and in calling down the anathemas of the church, and of all good men."

Savonarola, according to this polemical journalist, ended in losing the faith, and in calling down, on his defection from it and from virtue, the anathemas of the Church and of all good men.

Mr. Brownson has stated, that Savonarola had proved false to his religion, lost the faith, and deservedly incurred the maledictions of mankind.

Mr. Brownson in this statement, has failed in nearly all the obligations, that a Christian writer lies under, to truth, justice, and charity.

Fra Girolamo never wrote a line in which one iota of doctrine can be found opposed to any one article of Roman Catholic faith, or at variance with any Christian principle.

The life of Savonarola, from the cradle to the stake, was one in which the enemies of Christ and his Church have not been able to discover a single stain, or a single crime that has left a stigma on his faith and morals. No anathemas have ever been pronounced by any council of the Church, or by the speaking organ of its authoritative decisions, on any specific articles of belief propounded by Savonarola, nor have any of them formally and officially been pronounced to be heretical. No maledictions have ever been pronounced on Savonarola's life or labours by any good man who was thoroughly acquainted with them.

Anathemas have been pronounced by Alexander the Sixth on Savonarola, as a slanderer of the rulers of the church; as a disturber of the public peace; as a visionary, mistaking illusions of the imagination for revelations from on high; but even by that unhappy Pontiff, no formal sentence of condemnation has been pronounced on any article of belief, contrary to Catholic doctrine, contained in any writings of Savonarola, specially pointed out, and duly inquired into, according to the canons of the church.

But no inquirer after truth, who has to travel through the times of which we treat, can with justice to his pursuit place that unhappy Pontiff, Alexander the Sixth, in the category of good men. It may suit the pages of Mr. Brownson's polemical periodical, to exercise the minds of rhetorists in logical tilts and tournaments, in assertions that are advanced with wonderful effrontery, as if apparently put forth for an intellectual recreation, to fight with other assertions of his own, like those respecting Savonarola, in a former number of the same periodical, diametrically opposed to the last animadversions on that illustrious Dominican, in the Review for April, 1852. Credibility may be startled by such assertions; credulity may be worked on by them; but the cause of religion is not benefited by those escapades of criticism, on subjects which are very closely connected with sacred interests.

In Mr. Brownson's notice of "l'Histoire des Souveraines Pontifes Romains," by the Chevalier Artaud de Montor, in his Quarterly Review for April, 1852, page 279, we find the following passage. "Several correspondents, some of them highly esteemed friends, and most worthy clergymen, and some of them liberal Protestants, or liberal Catholics, have taken exception to our statement, that 'We have yet to see full evidence that any Pope, after he became Pope, was a very bad man,' and have referred to the concessions to the contrary, of certain Catholic historians.

"The concessions we are referred to, we were well aware of, and we protested against them, as unwarranted by the facts in the case. We expressly asserted that they were uncalled for,

and that they constitute the only real embarrassment of the Catholic in his controversies with the enemies of the Church. We therefore refused to accept them as authority, and consequently there was no use in citing them against us. Their justice was the point our correspondents should have proved. Our readers are requested to bear in mind that we did not say that we had seen no evidence, but that we had yet to see full evidence, that is conclusive evidence. Nor did we pretend that every Pope had been a good man: we simply said, that 'we had yet to see full evidence that any Pope, after he became Pope, was a very bad man.' Here is a point which our correspondents appear to have overlooked, and yet it is a point of some importance. A man may not be very good, may not be a saint, and yet may not be very bad, that is, very wicked."

Mr. Brownson further goes on to state his great satisfaction at finding his opinions on this subject sustained by Artaud de Montor, who observes, in his work on the Lives of the Popes, "that there were many Popes, according to human modes of judging, who committed mistakes, and, through weakness or love of peace, yielded too much to the tyranny and rapacity of temporal sovereigns, but none who were governed by an unjust ambition, or who were grasping and oppressive."

What amount of testimony might afford "the full evidence" required by Mr. Brownson to convince him that Alexander VI. was a bad Pontiff after he had been elevated to the Papal throne, it is difficult to conceive.

The evidence of Platina, Guicciardini, Tiraboschi, Machiavelli, Denina, Nardi, Corio, is sufficiently conclusive on this point.

There is a sin, which is said to be against the Holy Ghost, and many of the most illustrious fathers of the Church and modern theologians of the highest repute are of opinion that great transgression is the sin of simony.

All the ecclesiastical and secular historians at the time of Alexander VI., with scarcely an exception, accuse that Pontiff of making holy things and sacred offices vendible and purchaseable articles of merchandize, marketable commodities, from

which a revenue was derived, that was lavished by his son in scandalous debaucheries and sanguinary warfare.

That crime of simony, which Alexander VI. stood convicted of in the eyes of the whole church in his own time, Savonarola denounced, and the whole tenor of his sermons and his writings, from the time that unworthy Pontiff made a purchase of the highest dignity of the church, would seem to indicate that a special mission had been delegated to that friar from on high, and the main object of it was to denounce the disorders of the court of Rome, the relaxation of the discipline of the church, and in all its religious orders, evils that were mainly occasioned by that sin of simony, of which Alexander VI. was notoriously guilty from the date of his elevation to the Pontifical dignity, to that part of his career, at which the denunciation of the crime of corruption, and the heart-cry of Savonarola for the renovation of the church, brought that great soldier of the cross to the stake.

Mr. Brownson has declared, that Savonarola, like Lamennais, had fallen away from the faith.

But in which of the works of Savonarola has this recently converted Unitarian gentleman found full "evidence of the fact," that Savonarola had ever propounded an opinion at variance with, or hostile to, any particle of Catholic faith? Alas! alas! poor Lamennais has propounded numerous opinions at variance with, and hostile to, not Catholicism alone, but every form of belief on which Christianity of any sect can stand. The works of Lamennais, his "Esquise d'une Philosophie," are unfortunately but too easily to be found, no doubt, in the United States as in all European countries; but the works of Savonarola are not so easily procurable in America. Even in the best libraries of Europe, those works are of such exceeding rarity, that it is with the greatest difficulty, and only with the most patient research, they are to be met with.

It may be very questionable if any of the original works of Savonarola ever came into the hands of Mr. Brownson in the United States. And there is good reason to believe, that if that gentleman ever visited Europe before his conversion, that the

works of Savonarola were not those which would have been sought for by him, at least with anything more than mere literary curiosity.

Savonarola's memory has suffered injustice at the hands of Mr. Brownson. The memory of a man of great piety, of a great zeal for the honour and glory of God, and the true interests of pure religion, has suffered much at the hands of Roman Catholic criticism; truth has a controversy with the pen of Mr. Brownson and a full reparation to demand and to expect from it.

Bzovius, the learned Dominican, in his work entitled "Pontifex Romanus," sive "Commentarius de prestantia officio auctoritate et summorum Pontificum,"* in proof of the doctrine of the primacy of St. Peter, and of the pre-eminence of the Roman Catholic Church, cites the opinions of a vast number of ecclesiastical writers, the most celebrated of their several ages; and amongst them, of Savonarola. One of the passages he cites of the latter is from the fourth book of the "Triumphus Crucis," which, literally rendered in our language, is as follows:

"The Roman Church is the head and mistress of all churches. All faithful Christians should be united to the one Roman Pontiff, as to its one head. Who departs from unity and the doctrine of the Roman Church, he without doubt departs from Christ. All heretics who depart from that one Roman Church, are not Christians, nor is it lawful they should call themselves falsely by that name. All, in matters of faith, should submit difficulties to the Roman Pontiff, without whom neither disputed questions touching faith can be decided, nor incipient heresies be suppressed. That doctrine is true which has the consent of the fathers, but all other doctrine dissenting from that is false. All heretics deem it lawful with all their strength to combat the Roman church: nevertheless victorious still it stands, and will remain, but sects of heretics, and opinions that are fallacious, come to nothing, and shall be made of no effect; but that truth which is founded in the church, is posted on a firm rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

* Pontifex Romanus Commentarius, Rev. P. Tr. M. Bzovii Or. Predic. Fol. *Colon.* 1619.

The passage in the original Latin I have thought it desirable to give in the Appendix, not from Bzovius, but from the quarto edition of Savonarola's own work, in order that there may be no cavilling, either with the citation in this place of Bzovius, or the translation of this remarkable passage.

Without anticipating matters in the history of Savonarola, such conclusive evidence as this, of his fidelity to his church, may surely be made use of even incidentally here, for the purpose of showing with what bad faith writers have acted, who have claimed Savonarola for a disciple of Wycliffe, or Lollard, Huss, or Jerome of Prague; and with what gross ignorance Roman Catholic writers have dealt with the doctrines of Savonarola, and with what effrontery and uncharitableness they have condemned the writings of a man whom very few of them have ever had the opportunity of examining or of knowing, except at the hands of his opponents, and in their works.

Savonarola never spoke with greater freedom of the evils that prevailed in the Court of Rome, and the government of the Church, while Alexander held the reins, than the great St. Bernard spoke to the popes themselves, of the evils which beset both in his times. In the "Book of Considerations," addressing his exhortations to Pope Eugenius, he says: "Where shall I begin? I will begin with your worldly affairs, because it is with regard to this that I participate most deeply in your grief, if indeed it be a grief to you, and if not, then is my sorrow only the greater, since the disease is even the more perilous for him by whom the sickness is not felt. Far be it from me to suspect you of this.... yet trust not too far to this present sensation, for nothing is so firmly fixed in the soul, but that, through neglect and the lapse of time, its virtue may be lost. We are incapable of a continued and passionate sorrow, the burden appears at first intolerable; time and habit familiarize us with it, so that we begin to think it less oppressive; we soon become insensible to its weight, and in the end we find it agreeable, and thus a violent and present sorrow speedily ends either in recovery or in insensibility....

"Did Paul make himself the servant of men, for the purpose of ministering to their covetousness? Or did the ambitious, the covetous, the sacrilegious, the unclean, and such like monsters of men, come flocking to Paul from the ends of the earth, to solicit or to retain ecclesiastical preferments through his apostolical authority? Nay, those men, to whom 'to live was Christ, and to die was gain,' made themselves servants unto men, that they might win men to Christ, and not that they might increase the gains of covetousness. Presume not then to allege the wise diligence, and the free and beautiful love of the Apostle Paul, as a ground of justification for slavish life. How much more suitable would it be to your apostolic character, how much safer for your conscience, how much more profitable for the church of God, if you would rather listen to Him when he says, 'Ye are bought with a price, be not ye, therefore, the servants of men.'* What can be at once more slavish and more unseeming a pope, than to be employed, not only every day, but every hour in such matters, and for such men? And when then comes the hour of prayer? When do we provide for the instruction of the people or the edification of the Church? When do we discourse upon the law? The laws, indeed, resound daily in your palace, but they are the laws of Justinian, and not the laws of God. And should this be so? It is for you to look to it. Verily, the law of the Lord 'is a law concerning the soul;' but here exist what are not so properly laws, as a crop of disputations and cavillings, subverting the right. Tell me then, how can you, a 'shepherd and bishop of souls,' allow that law to be silent, while those laws are always to be heard? Paul, when he draws the character of a bishop, saith that 'he who serveth God may not entangle himself with the affairs of this life!'....

"And yet I trow there is not one of these men (debating questions of earthly possessions) that can show an Apostle who ever set up for a judge between men, to decide matters appertaining to boundaries, and the division of estates.† I find, indeed, that the Apostles submitted to be judged, but I find not

* 1 Cor. vii. 23. † 2 Tim. ii. 4.

that they were in any case judges themselves. In the day of retribution they shall indeed sit as judges, but not in this world. It seemeth to me, that he who fears lest his refusal to judge such matters should prejudice the authority of the Apostles and their successors, cannot yet have attained to a right standard of estimating things; since they judge not such matters, because to them is committed the judgment of far higher matters; your power applies to moral, not earthly possessions; which power and authority appears to you to be the greater, that of forgiving sins, or that of dividing goods? And since kings and princes are set to judge earthly things, why should you invade their province? Why put your sickle into another man's harvest?"*

Before the time of Savonarola, and subsequently to it, the evils above referred to were deplored and reprobated, not only with impunity, but with advantage to the character for sanctity or fidelity to the interests of the Church, of those who cried out for the renovation of it.

"The territory of the Lord (said Leo the Tenth, in 1514) required to be ploughed up from bottom to top, to make it produce new fruits."†

"Nostra firma intentio et dispositio, universalem reformationem tanquam utilem et necessariam: ad Domini agri purgationem et culturam omnino prosequi et perficere."‡

* Life of St. Bernard by Dr. Augustus Neander, pp. 292-3.
† Hist. de Luther, par M. Audin, t. 1, p. 182. ‡ Ib. Lessio 7ma. Con. Lat.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REFORMATION OF MANNERS.—REVIVAL OF RELIGION.—RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS.—AUTO-DA-FE OF VANITIES, AND LICENTIOUS BOOKS AND OBJECTS OF ART.—THE "LAUDE" AND SPIRITUAL SONGS OF SAVONAROLA.

"There is a divine enthusiasm in genius and poetry, which, when roused and set in motion, communicates the impulse to others, when it receives its fulness from above, and diffuses to all around the light imparted from heaven."—*Procli Comment.*

"Il cantar, che nell' anima si sente;
Il più ne sente l'alma, il men l'orecchio."

THE wonderful fruits of the preaching of Savonarola signally manifested themselves in the course of the years 1495 and 1496. A complete revolution was effected in the manners and morals of the people of Florence. High and low, rich and poor, young and old, gave edifying proofs of the wonderful power of the reforming friar of San Marco. Every Sabbath and festival day, the church was thronged, as it usually was on Easter Sunday, not with persons merely coming to hear mass, but with devout communicants. It was astonishing the numbers that frequented the sacraments; the confessionals were surrounded daily by penitents. "The most surprising change had taken place (in modes of life), that had ever occurred in the memory of man."*

The amount of the restitution of money that had been wrongfully acquired, was enormous. Vast sums of money were advanced by opulent people, to send to foreign countries for grain, of which there was a dearth at this period, and the supply thus obtained was disposed of at a moderate price to the poor. Money was also lent to a very large extent to the

* Burlamacchi, p. 549.

industrious poor by the rich, free of interest, which had never been done previously, except on a very scale, by some charitable persons.

Among the converts gained over, either from infidelity or sinful lives, by the preaching of Fra Girolamo, Burlamacchi enumerates the celebrated John Pico de Mirandola; Domenico Benevieni, the biographer of the Father; his brother Girolamo, well versed in philosophy and scholastic learning; Georgio Benigno, a renowned Franciscan theologian, subsequently a prelate; Ulevierc, a canon of the Duomo, one of the most learned men of the time; Fra Zanobi Acciajoli, a famous classical scholar; Georgio Vespucci, the preceptor of Zanobi, not much less celebrated for knowledge of Greek and Latin; Thomaso Sqratico, a distinguished orator; Pulinari of Viterbo, an eminent physician and alchymist, and many others of the first scholars and artists of those times.

People came to the churches of the Duomo and San Marco three and four hours before the time appointed for the sermons, in order to procure a place, so great was the difficulty of getting ever room to stand, when Fra Girolamo preached. The reciting of the divine office, even by the laity, became by no means uncommon. But the most remarkable change that was apparent in the manners of the people, in their recreations and amusements, was the abandonment of demoralizing practices, of debauchery of all kinds, of profane songs of a licentious character, which the lower orders of the people especially were greatly addicted to; and the growth of a new taste and passion for spiritual hymns and sacred poetry, that had succeeded that depraved taste.

In 1496, the effects of Savonarola's labours were especially manifested in the edifying behaviour of the children of both sexes, in all festivals and occasions of devotional solemnities in the churches and the public processions, which at this period began to be of frequent occurrence in Florence.

Particular attention was paid to the recreation intended for them, spiritual songs were expressly composed for them. In the church, on certain festivals, an elevated platform was constructed

for them, with several rows of seats, like those in a gallery, extending backwards to the wall, and rising to a considerable height.

"The reform" which had reached the youth of Florence, assumed a systematic shape and character. The young reformed were called "Children of Christ," and "disciples of Fra Girolamo." They frequently approached the sacraments, and regularly attended devotional exercises. They carefully observed the commandments of God and of the church; they sedulously avoided theatrical spectacles and balls, masquerades, and public sports; they were simple in their clothing; vanities of society, and superfluities of any kind, they were taught to look on with contempt. The children who were associated in this confraternity were nearly all either of noble origin, or of respectable parentage. They went in procession through the streets on numerous occasions, attended by proper caretakers; rebuking other children, and young women especially, going about with too much freedom in costly apparel, and bedizened with rich ornaments; saying to them, on the part of Christ, "The King of our city, and the blessed Virgin Mary, require of you to abandon those vanities, and come out from amongst the evil-minded, otherwise the judgment of sickness will fall upon you."

These little bands of "Christ's children, and disciples of Fra Girolamo," went out from house to house, begging the masters and mistresses to give up any articles of vanity in their possession, pictures or ornaments that were not calculated to excite pious sentiments, cards and dice, masques and mummeries of all kinds, cosmetics, false hair, books of amatory poetry, licentious publications, and works of art. The gracious, mild, and innocent manner in which such objects of vanity or licentiousness were sought, disarmed all feelings of irritation and anger which otherwise might have been manifested at those proceedings.

But it is quite evident that they could hardly fail eventually to be attended with results which, instead of benefiting religion, would be likely to prove prejudicial to it.

The juvenile confraternity of "The Reform," in accordance with the views of their guardians and spiritual directors, proceeded on an appointed day to the palace of the Signoria in procession, in order to obtain from the civil magistracy the confirmation of the rules of their confraternity.

The spokesmen of the body addressed the Signoria in a suitable discourse, supplicating the confirmation of their rules with this preamble: "Magnificent and exalted Signori, and your members of council and magistrates,—The omnipotent God and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 'King of Kings, Lord of Lords,' who, by his goodness and clemency, was pleased to become the especial king of our city, and his ever virgin mother Mary, its queen, the year of the liberation of this our city from servitude, and of its restoration to liberty, in order the better to be able to reform manners, and for the people to lead Christian lives, has sent his prophets, who, by their holy preaching, may give light and spirituality to our souls."*

The Signoria returned a gracious answer to the young confraternity, giving them to understand the matter would be referred to Fra Girolamo and Fra Domenico de Pescia, for their consideration and determination.†

On Palm Sunday (1496), a grand procession was determined on by Fra Girolamo, on a scale of magnitude heretofore never attempted in Florence.

* Burlamacchi, p. 557.

† The following are the rules drawn up for the guidance of the youthful order instituted by Savonarola:

"Every youth who wishes to be a son of Jesus Christ and a disciple of Father Girolamo and of his doctrine, must diligently observe the commandments of God and of the holy Roman Church, must be constant at confession and communion, fervent in solemn prayer and at preaching; must not be found at public worldly spectacles, such as theatres and masquerades. Their clothing should be simple, according to the condition of each, without slashings or other vanities. They should cut their hair close about their ears; avoid games and bad company like serpents; never hear or read impure books, either in their own language or in Latin; should shrink from lascivious poets as from deadly poison, and occupy themselves on festivals with divine things, not going to schools for fencing, dancing, singing, or playing."—*Eng. Biog. of Sav.*

After the solemnization of high mass at San Marco, and the distributing of the palm to the assembled multitude by Fra Girolamo, the children, in vast numbers, formed in procession, and proceeded to the Duomo to hear the sermon that was to be preached there. Again in the afternoon they assembled in the church of San Marco, and there, each having received a red cross, the procession was again formed, and set out through the principal streets of the city for the church of San Giovanni. A tabernacle was borne in the procession with a painting representing our Lord as he entered Jerusalem, mounted on an ass, and a number of people around it crying out, "Osanna filio David," and casting down their garments as the tabernacle was carried on.

On the opposite side of the tabernacle, there was a representation of the Virgin, admirably executed, with a superb crown, borne by angels. Then followed a great number of beautiful children, representing angels, who from their innocence and freshness might well realise the idea of beings who had recently issued from Paradise. The number of these children was 8,000, and it was wonderful to observe, as they moved along singing spiritual songs, their composure, order, regularity, and decorum.

Then followed the friars of several orders, and secular clergy and the laity in large numbers, bearing the red cross, and the palm in their hands.

Then came the female children, clothed in white, with garlands on their heads, and these were followed by ladies of the highest condition, as well as devout women of the humble classes.

So great was the zeal and enthusiasm of all classes on that occasion, that men of noble families, of grave character, of high dignity, and great renown for genius and learning, joined in that procession, clad in white with the red cross, and the palm in their hands, surrounding the tabernacle, and preceding it as David went before the ark—*Saltando e cantando e desprezzando ogni pompa mondano*—while the children kept constantly exclaiming, "*Viva Jesu Christo Re Nostro!*" And on that occasion,

for the first time, was sung the Lauda, composed by Girolamo Benevieni, beginning with the words "Viva Cristo in nostri cuori, viva Firenza."

In this way, exulting in a perfect ecstasy of spirituality and piety, in a state of enthusiasm bordering on delirious enjoyment, and exultation of religious sentiment approaching to extravagance, the procession moved on through all the leading thoroughfares of the city, till finally reaching the cathedral church of St. Maria del Fiore, the multitude entered the church, and recommended themselves and their republic to the divine mercy, and made an offering there of all the money that had been collected that day in alms to the institution of the Monte della Pieta, which Savonarola had established to save the industrious poor of Florence from the grasping avarice of the usurers. The children in numbers were seen ascending the steps of the high altar, depositing there the little vases they bore filled with money, gold and silver ornaments, rings, jewels, and precious objects of various kinds. Vases too of a large size were to be seen already ranged on the altar, filled with costly objects of adornment and apparel, and money offerings in abundance.

From the offerings of that day, four "Monti della Pieta" were established by Savonarola, in different parts of the city, and their establishment was the cause of a cessation of the trade of usury in each district where they were introduced.

The auto da fé of the vanities of Florence in 1497, at the commencement of the carnival, was a corollary of the collections and offerings of ornaments and precious objects borne in procession on Palm Sunday, in 1496, and deposited in the church of St. Maria del Fiore.

On the present occasion, however, the offerings were not turned to an useful account; in the constantly augmenting exaltation of religious opinion which carried forward the reform of Florence, it was considered an act of more heroic zeal to consume the holocaust of vanity altogether, than to retain any part of it for pious use.*

* Burlamacchi, p. 558.

When the people of Florence, at Savonarola's solicitation, gave up, in such vast quantities, books and pictures prejudicial to morality, and various objects of luxury that were deemed incentives to voluptuousness, one of Fra Girolamo's cotemporaries said—"The people of Florence, in their love of Christ, have turned fools."

Savonarola replied to this remark: "Such folly is the height of wisdom."*

"He had a large platform erected," says Burlamacchi, "in the Piazza de Signori, with a kind of pagoda, of a pyramidal form, fitted up with shelves or steps; on these were deposited all the objects of vanity, and of licentiousness, which had been collected by the children in the city. In the centre were placed various combustible materials. On one of the lower shelves were placed tapestries with indecent figures. On another, portraits of females and nude figures, and other representations that were deemed objectionable, though executed by artists of great eminence. On another shelf were placed cards, dice, and such like things used in gaming. Then, on another were laid various instruments of music—cymbals, lutes, and guitars. Then, on another shelf were placed a variety of female ornaments, perfumes, and cosmetics. The works of licentious writers, and especially of poets like Morganti, occupied another shelf. There was an abundant supply also of masques, false hair, theatrical and carnival dresses, and mummeries of various kinds. But there were objects, likewise, in the collection, of vanities of great value in ivory and alabaster, for which a merchant had in vain offered twenty thousand crowns to the Signori.

"Amidst the ringing of bells, the sounds of music, the shouts of a multitude of young people especially, exulting at the spectacle, in a state of enthusiasm almost indescribable, the pyramidal pagoda of vanities was set on fire, and nothing was left of them, in a few minutes, but ashes.

"And in a few months, another spectacle was seen in the same

† Dr. Karle Hafe's Neue Propheten, p. 124. Drei Historisch Politiche Kirchenbilder, 12mo. *Leipsic*, 1851.

square, of an auto-da-fé of a human being—of Girolamo Savonarola, the author of the spectacle we have just described; and while he was hanging from a cross, and while his body was consuming, and when it was reduced to ashes, the multitude were shouting in exultation, and the enthusiasm of their savage joy was not less loud than the mirth and gladness of the children of Florence, when they were consuming the vanities and relinquished objects of a licentious character of the same people."

"It was a very extraordinary sight," says Rio, "for the Florentines, to see that youth formerly so boisterous, so undisciplined, so insubordinate, submit to a rule of life so contrary to its customs and to its natural impetuosity, and to have a great desire for pious exercises, so as not to think of other things during seven consecutive years. In the paternal home, the rosary was recited, or the office of the Blessed Virgin was read, according to the difference of the ages of those reciting it, and they altogether conformed themselves, according to each one's capacity, to the plan of Christian education recommended by Savonarola. Out of doors, they attended all his sermons, and on the eve of solemn festivals they went together to make garlands of olive, sat down upon the green turf, distributed in groups that formed as many choirs, and chaunted hymns to the praise of God or of Mary; and those who passed that way, said, on returning from witnessing that scene, that to look at them appeared like a glimpse of paradise."

These hymns, composed for the most part by sufficiently good poets, and some to well-known airs, were one of the most efficacious means employed by Savonarola for the project of regeneration he had in view.

He knew that the custom of assembling on Saturday night, after *nones*, in the principal churches of Florence, to chaunt the spiritual canticles in alternate choirs, before an image of the Madonna, and that usually ended in a peformance on the organ, with voices and the accompaniments of bells, had continued, without interruption, even to the thirteenth century, and had acquired sufficient importance to give to its director the name

of a captain of *Laudesi*. He knew that, during all the time the interdict of 1376 lasted, men, women, and children thronged every night to the churches, to console themselves by those hymns for the temporary suppression of worship, and he had witnessed himself a company of trumpeters of old, organised at the expense of the state, to accompany the *caroccio* in time of war, the priors and holy-standard bearer in time of peace. This band used to come every Saturday to the old palace, to play national airs in honour of justice rendered to the people in the week that had flown away. On the other hand, he was not ignorant of the growing reputation which the licentious songs composed for the dances and orgies of the carnival had obtained; and he reasonably concluded from his personal observations, combined with historic traditions, that music exercised a great sway over the minds of the Florentines, and that it might make some amends for the mischievous productions of some poets. He resolved, therefore, to extend his reform even to that branch of art.

Here, again, the difficulty was not to be overcome as far as regards the old people, from whose memory it was impossible to root out all the bad ideas that this had accumulated and set a store on. It was easier to have to clean the stable of Augeas. Thus it was entirely through infancy and youth the plan of the reformer could be effected; and, in that limit, his triumph over profane music was so complete, that he celebrated his festivities exactly during the days of the carnival, in the midst of the hymns and blessings of an immense majority of the people.

"Lorenzo de Medici had a partiality," says Dr. Hafe, "for the carnival hymns which he brought into vogue and embellished. These 'Canti carnescialeschi' were printed in Florence, in 1559. Their style is generally burlesque mythology; for example, representations of the triumphs of Bacchus and Ariadne, drawn with great pomp through the streets. To these worldly pleasures Savonarola wished to oppose a holy carnival. Thus his adherents, often coming forth dancing, from Saint Mark's church to the market-place, a monk and a secular

person hand in hand, to the cry, 'Viva Christo;' this they called without hesitation, to be mad for the sake of Jesus, and they prided themselves rather on this folly."*

"In his musical reform (says Rio) he had two principal objects in view: in the first place, to give a fashion to singing at once simple, expressive, and majestic;—as, for instance, the hymns of the Church, known from time immemorial as the '*Ave Maris Stella*,' or the '*Veni Creator*,' which were so highly appropriate to the wants of the time. Afterwards he wished to substitute appropriate airs for those, to which Lorenzo di Medici and his court were accustomed to sing canzone composed by him, with a purity of style which was not to be expected from the author of drinking and dancing songs, the cynic coarseness of which disfigured the collection of his works. In order that the people might not be unfavourably disposed towards these new compositions, care had been taken to adapt the most popular airs, as the air of *faisan*, that of *la cigale*, &c., and this condescendence spared poets the trouble of forming choruses expressly for their compositions. Savonarola prescribed formally neither words nor music; but, by dint of making them repeat with their infantine voices the sweet melodies which were breathed with the same piety of the heart as by their pious ancestors, he caused them to be appreciated by the Florentines at their just estimate, and that important branch of Christian art had its share of the improvements introduced into all the others.

"Not to acknowledge Savonarola as a powerful logician, an accomplished orator, a profound theologian, a genius comprehensive and bold, a universal philosopher, or, rather, the competent judge of all philosophy, would be an injustice which history and his contemporaries would not tolerate.

"One might imagine without doubt that it would be more just to deny him the possession of that rare gift of an exquisitely acute and intuitive perception of the beautiful in the arts of imagination, which is not always the privilege of the greatest

* Dr. Karle Hafe, Neue Propheten, p. 324.

genius, and which supposes a sensibility of soul, and a delicacy of organs, too difficult to meet with, either the one or the other, in a monastic person devoted to the mortifications of the cloister; and yet, it is no exaggeration to say, that both are found united in a very high degree in Savonarola.

"By his entrance into monastic life, he imposed on himself the obligation of sacrificing everything that had become an object of strong attachment to him, and that sacrifice was never so afflicting as when it was necessary to divest himself of some images of saints, or pious books ornamented with miniatures. In the model convent which he proposed to found at Florence, and which was a Utopia as dear to his heart as to his imagination, the lay brothers began to occupy themselves assiduously with works of sculpture and painting. Their works were placed near the sanctuary, as the fountain of the purest inspirations, vestals of Christian art, there to guard the sacred fire.

"He knew, by his own experience, how much the pencil of truly Christian artists can aid the soul in shaking off its languor and facilitating its aspirations toward God, for he was often seen on his knees passing long hours in prayer before a picture of the Crucifixion, in the church of San Michele. We may go further, and affirm, without fear of contradiction, that his theory of the beautiful, that is expressed in scattered fragments throughout his sermons, surpasses in originality, as it does in profundity, all that the writers of the same age have said upon the subject, in following servilely, more or less, the frivolities of Aristotle or Quintilian. Without dwelling on his ingenious disquisitions on the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, considered in their relations with Christian preaching, I will content myself with quoting one of his most remarkable addresses, directed specially to artists.

"'Your ideas,' he said to them, 'are stamped with the grossest materialism .... the beauty of a composition is the result of proportion between its parts, or the harmony between the colours; but in that which is simple, beauty consists in transfiguration: that is, in light. Therefore it is far beyond visible

objects that we must look for supreme beauty in its essence. . . . The more human beings participate in and approach the beauty of God, the more beautiful they are—the same as the beauty of the body is in relation to the beauty of the soul; for, if you take two women in this assemblage, equally beautiful in person, she will be the most holy person who will excite among the spectators most admiration, and the palm will not fail to be given to her even by carnal men.'*

"He did not feel less sensibly the beauties of nature, and he understood better than most persons those beautiful words of Saint Paul—*Tam multa genera linguarum sunt in hoc mundo et nihil sine voce est.*

"During a short sojourn he made in Lombardy, brother James of Sicily, who had the happiness to accompany him in all his excursions, often yielded to the enthusiasm by which Savonarola was moved at the sight of some imposing and varied scene that might unfold itself to their eyes. They would choose some solitary and charming spot, and, after they had seated themselves in the shade upon the green turf, they would open a book of psalms to look for a text applicable to all the wonders of the valley and the mountains which spoke to them so eloquently of the glory and majesty of God.

"Savonarola has left more than one souvenir of that description with the monks of Saint Dominic of Fiesole, with whom he had wandered more than once over the adjacent hills, pouring forth in abundance divine strains of poetry which gushed from his soul, and made those who accompanied him feel something analogous to that which had been experienced by the two disciples at Emaus, when they asked each other if they did not feel their hearts burn within them when He, by whom they were accompanied, spoke to them."† . . .

"Savonarola thought it of importance to put a stop to the practice which in the time of the Medici had received so much

* Sermon, Third Sunday of Lent, on the discourse of Jesus with the Samaritan woman.

† La Poesie Chretienne, pp. 321, *et seq.*

encouragement from persons in high station, of singing licentious songs, and devoting leisure to a species of amatory literature, which the Florentine poets and scholars of that day provided largely for the depraved taste of the public.

"To understand the nature of these compositions," it is well remarked by De Rians, "it is necessary to bear in mind the political condition of Florence from the year 1490 to 1492, when Lorenzo governed the republic as an absolute sovereign. Amongst the means adopted by this great and astute man to secure his power—always increasing over the Florentine people—he imagined a new style of poetry, which he called *Canti Carnascialeschi*, carnival songs, in order to give more effect to certain masquerades, in which some triumph or subject of art was represented. To render those orgies more attractive and brilliant, he spared no expense. The chariots, with the carousers, went about the city from after dinner to two, and even three hours of the night, men wearing masks following them on horseback, richly apparelled, sometimes in bands exceeding three hundred, with equally large numbers of persons on foot, with flames and torches, which rendered the night as bright as day. In this order they paraded through the city, with singers and musicians, the vocal performers varying in numbers, from four or five, to twelve or fifteen, accompanied with trumpets and other musical instruments, singing canzone ballads, madrigals, and *barzellete*, appropriate to the character of each masquerade, as for instance: Il tronfo di Baccho è Arianna, i canti delle fanciulle e della cigale, della Foresi, de Bericuocolai, delle filatrice d'oro, degli Mogli giovani e de Mariti vecchi, de Mulatieri, de Romiti, &c.

"Those poetical effusions were adapted to all sorts of tastes of the people of Florence, inordinately fond of pleasure and of festivities; so that the carnival songs (imagined by Lorenzo) gave rise to a description of composition which was cultivated by the most celebrated literary men of the succeeding age.

"Such festivities and worldly poetry, and for the most part indecent and immoral, contrasted singularly with the religious

and political opinions of Fra Girolamo and his numerous followers, who urged on the Holy See the necessity of the ecclesiastical reform, and desired the establishment of popular government."*

With the idea of putting an end to this mode of corrupting public morals, Savonarola conceived the plan of substituting for the carnival-poetico-mithologico-burlesque lyric compositions of Lorenzo's introduction, a certain *santo carnasciale*, a carnival sacred poetry for popular canzone, united and sanctified with religious observances, public ceremonial functions, prayers, and processions, and other mystic canticles, either expressly composed or brought into use by him. . . .

In the course of the first *santo carnasciale* even the dance was not despised by Savonarola, considering it as a mystic recreation, when used in the way of which we have an account in the poetry of the Beato Jacopone da Forli, cant. viii. lib. 7.

"Nol mi pensai giamai
Di danzar alla danza
Ma la sua innamorata
Jesu, lo me ne fare."

Of these strange lines, and a few others not easily rendered into English, the following attempt at a translation may give some slight idea:

I never thought to mingle in the dance,
But when my soul's beloved meets me there,
Then in my gladness in the mystic dance
I move, and all my joys in Christ are crown'd.

A friend of Fra Girolamo, Girolamo Beneviene, fell into some extravagances endeavouring to supply suitable lyrics for the *santo carnasciale*.

Thus sung the enthusiastic *Piagnone* Beneviene:

"Non fu mai piu bel sallazzo
Pui giocondo ne maggiore,
Che per zelo e per amore,
Di Jesù, di venir pazzo,

* De Rian's Poesie di Savonarola, 12mo. *Fir.* 1847.

Ognun grido com' io grido
Sempre pazzo, pazzo, pazzo."

"Solace there never was sweeter here,
Greater enjoyment or more delight,
Than from zeal for Christ and love sincere,
To men, to seem to be fools downright.
Ev'ry one cries in the transports, 'Hist!
Ever a fool, let me be for Christ.'"

Another of these canzone of the sacred carnival, still more strange and singular, the strains of a muse worshipped by an enthusiast, bordering on fanaticism, runs thus:

I.

"Io vo darti anima mia,
Un remedio sol, che vale
Quant' ogni' altro a ciascun male
Que si chiama la pazzia.

II.

To tre once almen di speme
Tre di fede e sei d'amore
Due di pianto e poni insieme,
Tutto al fuoco del timore.

III.

Fa di bollir tre ore,
Premi in fine e aggiunge tanto
D'umiltade, e dolor quanto
Basta a far questa pazzia."

These last stanzas I have found it hardly possible to translate into intelligible English.

I.

I will prescribe for thee, my soul,
A remedy that's far above
All cures which people do extol;
'Tis called the foolishness of Christ.

II.

Three ounces take of hope, three more
Then take of faith, of love twice three,
Five of compunction, mix them o'er
The fire of holy fear of God.

III.

Boil the ingredients well, then strain,
And add enough of tears, in fine
And humble thoughts, and call it then
Madness or folly, that's divine.

But the Laude of Savonarola are of a very different description of spiritual poetry from these lyrical extravaganze, as the translations of a few of the most remarkable pieces will plainly show.

Savonarola's "Lauda, al Crocifisso," composed for singing with music, for three voices, is one of those spiritual airs or canticles which were much in vogue in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and in a less degree in the fifteenth century. Those laude used to be sung, not only in churches and convents, and especially in the Church of Saint Maria del Fiore, but by the laity also, on Saturdays particularly, after the office of the nona, by men, women, and children: five or six of those laude would be sung by different singers alternately. In the churches the laude usually finished with the Ave Maria. *Un Capitano de Laudese*, says Burlamacchi, or leader of the singers of the laude, usually regulated the choruses. The importance of these laude as devotional exercises was manifested in 1376, when the Pope placed the city of Florence under an interdict, and the people being deprived of the sacraments and ceremonies of their religion, had recourse to the only means left them of worshipping God by private prayer and public assemblies; for the purpose of singing laude and the capitano de laudesi on those occasions, in some sort affected the character of ecclesiastics, so far as performing their functions with due solemnity. Savonarola found the laude in desuetude in his time. He judged that its reestablishment would be useful to religion, and would tend to divert the minds of the public from the sensual and profane songs, combining licentiousness and paganism in poetry, voluptuousness clothed in classical attire, which in the latter times of Lorenzo de Medici was so much the fashion.

The following specimens of those laude of Savonarola, in

English verse, will suffice to give an idea of the nature of those compositions.

For the English versions of the "Ode to the Cross" and "Jesus to the Soul," I am indebted to a lady of poetic genius of the highest order, whose spirit-stirring compositions under the signature of Speranza, are not surpassed by any similar lyrics of our times.

HYMN TO THE CROSS.

I.

Jesus, refuge of the weary,
Object of the spirit's love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Saviour from the world above!

(Refrain.)

Gracious and great thy love divine,
Manifold ever thy mercies shine,
Happy the soul that may blend with thine.

II.

Oh, how oft thine eyes, offended,
Gaz'd upon the sinner's fall,
Yet Thou on the cross extended,
Bore the penalty of all!

Gracious and great Thy love divine, &c.

III.

For our human sake enduring
Tortures infinite in pain,
By thy death our life assuring,
Conquerors, through Thee we reign!

Gracious and great Thy love divine, &c.

IV.

Still we passed the cross in scorn,
Breathing no repentant vow,
Though from 'neath the circling thorn,
Dropp'd the blood-sweat of Thy brow.

Gracious and great Thy love divine, &c.

V.

Yet Thy sinless death hath bought us
Life eternal, peace and rest;
What Thy grace alone hath taught us,
Calms the sinner's stormy heart.
Gracious and great Thy love divine, &c.

VI.

Jesus, would my heart were burning
With more vivid love for thee,
Would my eyes were ever turning
To Thy cross of agony.
Gracious and great Thy love divine, &c.

VII.

Would that on that cross suspended,
I the martyr's palm might win,
When the Lord the heaven descended,
Sinless suffered for my sin.
Gracious and great Thy love divine, &c.

VIII.

Cup of torture! may'st thou rend me
With thy fierce unearthly dole,
Welcome be the pangs that lend me
Strength to crush sin, in my soul.
Gracious and great Thy love divine, &c.

IX.

So in pain and rapture blending,
Might my fading eyes grow dim,
While the freed heart rose, ascending,
To the circling seraphim.
Gracious and great Thy love divine, &c.

X.

Then in glory, parted never
From the blessed Saviour's side,
Graven on my heart for ever,
Be the cross and crucified.

Gracious and great Thy love divine,
Manifold ever Thy mercies shine,
Happy the soul that may blend with thine!

JESUS TO THE SOUL.

Fair soul, created in the primal hour,
Once pure and grand,
And for whose sake I left my throne and power
At God's right hand;
By this sad heart pierced through because I love thee,
Let love and mercy to contrition move thee.

Cast off the sin thy holy beauty veiling,
Spirit divine!
Vain against Thee the hosts of hell assailing,
My strength is thine.
Drink from my side the cup of life immortal,
And love will lead thee back to heaven's portal.

Quench in my light the flame of low desire;
Crush doubt and fear,
Even to my glory may each soul aspire
If victor here.
Die now to earth with earthly vanity,
And live for evermore in heaven with me.

I for thy sake was pierced with many sorrows,
And bore the cross,
Yet heeded not the galling of the arrows,
The shame or loss.
So faint not thou whate'er the burden be,
Bear with it bravely, even to Calvary.

Still shall my spirit urge if thou delayest,
My hand sustain,
My blood wash out thy errors if thou strayest,
Plead I in vain?
An hour is coming when the judgment loometh,
Repent, fair soul, ere yet that hour cometh.

One of the most characteristic pieces of the time of the revival of religion in Florence is the canzone,

"Viva, viva, in nostro core,
Cristo Re, Duce e Signore!"

It has been translated for me with remarkable felicity, and exact conformity to the original, by a gentleman in every true sense of the term—spiritually minded.

HYMN.

[*Canzone à Fiorentine Composta Circa il* 1496.]

Viva, viva in nostro core
Cristo Re, Duce e Signore.
Dwell within the heart adored,
Christ, our gentle king and lord.

I.

Oh, let each his understanding
Free from passion, and resign
Earthly pleasures and affections,
Let him melt in love divine.
Look to Christ, our King, regarding
All his bounties, old and new,
So with fasting and repentance,
Inmost thoughts and heart renew.

II.

If you wish that Jesus triumph,
By his grace your heart above
All its hatred and disdaining,
Change to peaceful, gentle love.
Ev'ry hateful feeling banished,
Who of such the peace can tell,
Here in heart and there in heaven,
Jesus loves with them to dwell.

III.

Gentle Jesus, O how blessed
He who flies this world for Thee,
His the breast whose state is ever
Calm, serene, and spirit free.
Oh, how oft alone I marvel!
That by merest dross enticed,
Men should lose that priceless treasure,
Joy and glory which is Christ.

IV.

Rome, arise then, oh, benign one!
'Gainst the world-wide Pharaoh's might,
Casting down the old red dragon,
Blanch our stains to swanlike white.
Rouse, even now, the royal lion,
With the tribe of Judah's might,
Where the wrath of God has fallen,
Horror reigns and pains the sight.

V.

Blessed be the virgin mother,
Blessed Jesus Christ our love,
Blessed Lord and faithful pastor
Of the sacred folds above.
Who for those who sat in sighing,
Caused the light to break, e'en thus,
Let the brightness, living, dying,
Of his glory beam on us.

In the following version of one of the most popular hymns of Savonarola, I have endeavoured to give the meaning of the original, scarcely hoping, however, to give an adequate idea of the tender piety that breathes in every line of it:—

"Ad Virginem Mariam
Funde preces in cœlis."

[*A Hymn composed in the time of the great plague in Florence.*]

Oh, star of Galilee,
Shining o'er this earth's dark sea,
Shed thy glorious light on me,
Maria, Stella Maris!

Queen of clemency and love,
Be my advocate above,
And thro' Christ all sin remove,
Maria, Stella Maris!

When the angel called thee blessed,
And with transports filled thy breast,
'T was thy Lord became thy guest,
Maria, Stella Maris!

Earth's purest creature thou!
In the heavens exulting now,
With the halo round thy brow,
Maria, Stella Maris!

Beauty beams in every trace
Of the Virgin Mother's face,
Full of glory and of grace,
Maria, Stella Maris!

A beacon to the just,
To the sinner hope and trust,
Joy of the angel host,
Maria, Stella Maris!

Ever glorified! thy throne
Is where thy blessed Son
Doth reign—through him alone,
Maria, Stella Maris!

All pestilence shall cease,
And sin and strife decrease,
And the kingdom come of peace,
Maria, Stella Maris!

By the kindness of Dr. Wm. Beattie, "Amicus Amicorum et Musarum," I am enabled to place before my readers an admirable English version of the "Lauda di Santa Maria Maddalena," which Savonarola sent to his sister Beatrice, in a letter dated the 3rd of November, 1496.

Jesus! source of heavenly light,
Fountain of celestial grace;
In Thee my heart and hopes unite,
I languish to behold Thy face!
Ever living, still forgiving
All who timely turn to Thee;
Here, before Thee, I implore Thee,
In mercy, Lord, remember me!
Here, with Mary, at Thy feet,
I bow before Thy mercy-seat.
Alleluia!

II.

Jesus! while I breathe Thy name,
While to Thee my spirit turns;
Kindling with seraphic flame,
My heart with holy rapture burns.
All my sadness turns to gladness,
Wealth and fame are worthless dross;
How rapt the feeling, thus when kneeling
Prostrate at my Saviour's cross.
With Mary, prone at Jesu's feet,
I bow before Thy mercy-seat.
Alleluia!

III.

Tho' lost in sin, I know that Thou
Hast suffer'd to redeem "the lost;"
And, list'ning to the sinner's vow,
Had borne the cross, and paid the cost.
Oh, thus I borrow joy for sorrow,
Exult in faith and banish fear;
If woes oppress me, if pains distress me,
A look to Jesus dries my tear.
I feel that death itself were sweet,
That finds me kneeling at thy feet.
Alleluia!

IV.

Jesus! when the closing tomb
Shall close my day of sin and strife,
My soul, redeemed by Thee, shall bloom,
Engrafted on the Tree of Life.
In those bright regions, seraphic legions
Of saints in bliss and glory reign;
Where still ascending, but never ending,
They raise the same triumphant strain,
And kneeling at the Saviour's feet,
Thousand, thousand tongues repeat—
Alleluia! Alleluia!

V.

Jesus! life of all that live,
Oh, hear my penitential prayer,
My frailty, guilt, and sin forgive,
Thy cross my refuge in despair.

My soul to lighten, my course to brighten,
O send Thy spirit from above,
And while in anguish I sigh and languish,
Oh, cheer me with the voice of love,
While thus with Mary at Thy feet,
I bow before thy mercy-seat.
Alleluia!

Song of earth, in Mary's name,
Soar to heaven on wings of flame!
Saints, with golden lyre resound
The Saviour crucified and crown'd,
Who died the guilty to redeem,
Jesu is the sinner's theme.
Alleluia!

CHAPTER XIX.

PAGANISM IN EDUCATION.

"A certain ignorance very grievous, which notwithstanding has the appearance of the greatest wisdom."—PLATO, *De Legibus*, lib. XX.

"Ye fathers! let your children learn grammar, and keep able men as teachers who are accomplished, and not players—pay them well, and see that the schools are no holes and corners. All should practise grammar in some degree, for it wakens the mind and helps much. But the poets should thereby not destroy everything else. There should be a law made that no bad poet should be read in the schools, such as Ovid—de Arte Amandi, Tibullus, and Catullus—of the same sort, Terence in many places. Virgil and Cicero I would suffer. Homer in the Greek, and also some passages from Augustine's work *De Civitate Dei*—or from Jerome, or something out of the Holy Scripture. And where you teachers find in those books Jupiter, Pluto, and the like named, say then—children, these are fables, and show them that God alone rules the world. So would the children be brought up in wisdom and in truth, and God would be with them."—*Sermon of Sav.*

OF the great reform in sciences, arts, and all branches of public education, attempted by Savonarola, and his efforts to purify the mind and imagination of youth by prohibiting all licentious works of poetry, music, and painting, we have some admirable observations in Rio's work—"La Poesie Chretienne."

"Let us," says Rio, "as the friends of art and Christian poetry, fix our attention on a contest full of life most dramatic and imposing, sustained by a single monk against the spirit of his age in the face of all Italy.

"His mission is to re-establish the reign of Christ in the heart, in the spirit and thoughts of the people, and to extend the benefits of the redemption to all the human faculties, and to every thing of their creation.

"The enemy which he combats with all the energy of his soul and all the power of his utterance, is the paganism of which he found the imprint everywhere—in the arts as in the manners, in the opinions as in the acts, in the cloister as in the schools of his day." *

In our times, the same question of "Paganism in Education," which Savonarola mooted upwards of three centuries and a half ago, is again made a subject of controversy on the Continent.

In a remarkable work, published lately in France—"Le ver rongeur des Sociètes Modernes," par Mons. L'Abbé Gaume—we find the views adopted of Savonarola, respecting the evil results of filling the minds of children with such ideas as many of the classic poets of antiquity are calculated to produce there. The main points of controversy have been fairly stated by an eminent theological scholar.

"M. Gaume imagines that very many of the evils of society that have their origin in the education of youth may be traced partly to the Pagan ideas that are imbibed in the early study of the Greek and Roman classics; and partly, in a negative way, to the absence of the early Christian sentiments which should have been inculcated in their stead. It may not be generally known, that the books which we term 'classics' were not employed for the purpose of education previous to the fifteenth century—a knowledge of grammar, rhetoric, history, and of the Greek and Latin languages having been communicated before that epoch through the medium of works left by the Holy Fathers and other Christian writers. The 'classics' were, of course, known, and thoroughly understood too, during the middle ages; but nobody thought of putting them into the hands of youth; and it was only after the period known as the 'Renaissance,' that they began gradually to be employed for the purpose of primary education, and to become mixed up with the general tastes of society. Thus, by degrees, the Pagan ideas, which were previously only known as things that we read of in maturer years, became identified with the dreams of youth and

* La Poesie Chretienne, p. 304.

childhood, and gave a colouring to the man's thoughts in after-life. Pagan theogony became better known than the Christian catechism, and Pagan ethics were the best understood code of morals. But worse, infinitely worse than all, immorality in its most fascinating forms glittered brilliantly from the Pagan heaven, or flitted ever before the imagination in the soft strains of the Pagan poets, while passion in its more brutalising shapes offered itself stealthily, but constantly, to the eyes of youth in the uncastigated, or imperfectly castigated pages of almost every Pagan writer.

"On the other hand, the saints and martyrs of Christendom were no longer heard of in the public schools; Christian sentiments ceased to be mingled with secular duties; vast and invaluable opportunities of inculcating the love of Christian virtues in early life were lost for ever; and in a word, the 'Ages of Faith' vanished for ever from the earth. Here was a fearful loss of good, and a fearful gain of evil; but where, now-a-days, is the remedy? The Abbé Gaume and a noble host of the archbishops, bishops, and priests of France, tell us to go back as far as we possibly can to the old system; while, on the other hand, many learned and able churchmen, both bishops and priests in the same country, trace the evils of society to different sources from those pointed out by the Abbé Gaume."

In opposition to the views of Mons. Gaume, a Catholic theologian of Malines puts forward his opinions in a series of propositions to the following effect:

"First proposition—From the time of the Apostles to Gregory the Great the ancient authors were studied as they are at present; that is, for the sake of their beauty of form, and the good maxims and examples of moral virtues, both political and private, which they contained.

"Tertullian, cited by the Abbé Gaume himself, informs us that in his time young Christians were sent to Pagan schools to learn the 'Belles-lettres' in the profane authors, and that the only precaution taken was to caution them against the folly of the mythology of the poets.

"St. Basil, in his treatise on the 'reading of Pagan authors,' expressly says that children were instructed in profane literature before the Holy Scriptures were put into their hands—'Extèrnis utique his præmitiati, deinde sacras et arcanas doctrinas audiemus et assequemur.' He also explains the means to be adopted in order to draw from them the 'useful' and 'agreeable.' But his actions speak still louder than his words; no one is ignorant of the gratitude he always expressed towards Libanius, for having taught him to appreciate the elegance of Pagan literature. After becoming Bishop of Cæsarea, he sent his younger subjects to his former master, that they might drink of the pretended poisoned cup.

"There were, however, at that time, Christians who blamed this kind of instruction. St. Gregory of Nazianzen undertook to refute them in his eulogy of St. Basil: 'Hæc profana eruditio quam plerique Christiani pravo quodam judicio ut insidiosam et periculosam ac procul a Deo avertentem aspernantur, inter humana bona principem locum tenet.'

"We regret the Abbé Gaume should have passed this testimony over in silence, but more particularly that he should have omitted to speak of what took place under Julian the Apostate. This prince, as every one knows, issued an edict which commenced thus: 'Real instruction, in our opinion, does not consist in words, nor in harmonious or high-flown language, but in the healthy disposal of a sensible mind, which has a just appreciation of good and evil, of what is upright and what is not. Thus, whoever teacheth to his disciples what he believes to be false, is as little entitled to be called a learned as he is an honest man. That the tongue does not accord with the thought in small things, always shows a want of correctness to a certain point; but to speak in one way and to think in another on things of importance—for a man to teach what he believes to be bad, to praise authors he most condemns, and thus to deceive the young, is it not to traffic as those do, who, without honour or conscience, vaunt their bad merchandize to find purchasers?' Several other reflections of the same kind follow—the object of which is to

forbid Christian masters henceforth to teach, and pupils to study, Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates, Lysias, &c., and to enjoin them to take for classic authors St. Matthew and St. Luke, much as is now proposed. It is well known what the Fathers thought of this, and what they did with respect to it after the death of Julian.

"In the Latin church, it was not different. We will confine ourselves to Saint Jerome. Marianus Victor, his biographer, relates of him, that in his retreat at Bethlehem he directed the education of some young noblemen, and that he explained to them the Pagan poets, historians, and orators. This father applied himself to the same studies during a great part of his life. Ruffinus, his enemy, found cause for accusation on these grounds. But the Saint defended himself in his famous letter to Magnus, the Roman orator; he cited the example of the prophets and of Saint Paul, and the advantage which an immense number of ecclesiastical writers had drawn from the ancients. But what was the object of these studies? First, that he might clothe his own writings in the elegant form peculiar to the great Pagan authors —'Quod ergo mirum, si et ego sapientiam sæcularem propter eloquii venustatem et membrorum pulchritudinem de ancilla atque captiva Israelitidem facere cupio?' Saint Hilary of Poictiers omitted nothing to impart to his writings the style, the form, and the order he admired in Quintilian: —'Hilarius meorum confessor temporum et episcopus duodecim Quintiliani libros et stylo imitatus est et numero.' And did not Ruffinus himself exercise all his care to imitate the historian Sallust? 'Qui forte propter amorem historiarum Sallustii, Calphurnius cognomento Lanarius sit.' 'Let them not say, says the Saint, that it may be useful in disputes with the Gentiles; an almost universal custom says the contrary:—'Quia omnes pene omnium libri, exceptis his qui cum Epicuro litteras non didicerunt, eruditionis doctrinæque plenissimus sunt.'

"The second reason alleged by the saint is, that the writings of the Pagans are full of useful doctrines: 'Qui omnes in tantum philosophorum doctrinis atque sententiis suos refarciunt libros;

ut nescias quid in illis primum admirari debens, eruditionem sæculi an scientiam scriptuarum.'

"The third reason may be found in the examples left by the Gentiles themselves:—'Cur in opusculis nostris sæcularium litterarum interdum ponamus exempla.'

"Second proposition:—'During the whole course of the middle ages pure Latin was considered to be that of the Augustan age; which was also considered as the only classic age.'

"We find the proof of this in the Abbé Gaume himself:—'The programme of studies,' says he, 'traced by Marcianus Capella, remained unchanged during eleven centuries. At ten years commenced the studies according to rule; it was divided into two periods, each of five years. During the first the student went through the Trivium, which comprised grammar, dialectics, and rhetoric, &c.' Now, nothing is more certain than that under the denomination of grammar was included, not only grammar properly so called, but also the Pagan classic authors, particularly the poets."

The third proposition is substantially included in the others.

"Fourth proposition:—'The church has never discovered that the history of antiquity reduced itself to spoliation, war, slavery, divorce, materialism, and communism; on the contrary, she has condemned the Jansenists, who maintained that the Pagans had no natural moral virtues.'

"She has never effaced from the eighth chapter of Maccabees the magnificent eulogy that is there paid to the Romans; it is even inserted in the ecclesiastical office.

"Fifth proposition:—'The fathers have condemned those masters who, under the pretext of teaching their pupils new words, placed licentious passages under their eyes: this rule has been observed since the Renaisance in all religious schools, and war has always been carried on by the pontiffs, the councils, and by numerous writers against the colleges but little mindful of the respect due to youth. It is in this sense many passages of the fathers and other religious writers ought to be understood. We cannot at all see that Father Possevin, contending against

those colleges in which Terence was taught, should be invoked against the plan of studies promulgated by Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who goes yet further, and forbids the professors even of his colleges to study that author. It must be remembered that the banner of reform had only then been raised sixteen years.'

"Sixth proposition:—'The fathers condemned the academic style in preachers. Since the 'Renaisance,' precepts on pulpit eloquence have continued to distinguish the two kinds.'"

Cardinal Donnet, Archbishop of Bordeaux, in a very recent communication to the *Univers*, commenting strongly and severely on the opinions put forward in that journal on the controversy above referred to, says:—

"For three centuries corrected copies of the authors—the historians and poets of Rome and Athens—have been placed in the hands of children in Catholic colleges; and the Popes, witnesses of this usage, have not only tolerated it, and continue to tolerate it at this moment while we write, but they have permitted and even encouraged it. We have evidence of this in the editions of the classics published at Rome, with the authority of the Masters of the Sacred Palace. We may add, that we are indebted to Clement XI. for a corrected edition of the Metamorphoses of Ovid, printed in Rome in 1704, by Father Jouvency, who dedicated it to Charles Albany, nephew of the Pontiff, and at that time a pupil of the Roman College in which Clement XI. had studied Virgil, and Horace, and Cicero. We might appeal to other testimony by referring you, Sir, to the works of Innocent III., of Saint Columbanus, of Honorius I., of Saint Branlius, archbishop of Saragossa; of the venerable Bede, of Paul the deacon, of Saint Eugenius, Archbishop of Toledo; of Saint Livinus, of Saint Fortunatus, of Saint Boniface of Alaim, of Saint Peter Damien, and in fine, of Saint Jerome, whom you so often appeal to, and who cites for you fifty classic writers whose works are so full of erudition, 'that we know not whether more to admire in them the profane science or the science of the Scriptures.'"

To all these arguments, the Abbé Gaume replies in the

Univers:—"That it is very possible and practicable to make good scholars who shall be good Christians, but that it is more easy to effect this object by the presence than by the absence of Christian sentiments, truths, and precepts, in the first elements of education for the youthful mind.

"That the Pagan principles that pervade the poetry of Greece and Rome it is better should remain ignored, than that the doctrines of Christ and the science of the Saints should not be more firmly impressed on the mind of youth than all other knowledge. But it is not necessary the former should be ignored, because the latter is first taught and most chiefly studied."

Now let us see what Savonarola's views were on this subject.

"It was deemed necessary by Savonarola," says Rio, in his admirable work on Christian Art, "that nothing less than the Divine aid was requisite for purifying everything that paganism had defiled: for not a single branch of the arts or sciences, not a single faculty of the human understanding had escaped that contagion.

"By reason of prostrating themselves before that ancient idol, they at length became disgusted at the ignominy of the cross; and Burlamacchi tells us, that Savonarola found Florence full of people of rank, talented, ingenious, and abounding with human wisdom, who had not only lost their faith, but even ridiculed those who preserved it, and still more so those who defended it.

"It was thus with artists of the first order, who plainly avowed that they had never possessed it, and among those who were most cautious in avoiding scandal, the profession of Christianity was generally confined to the external practices of religion. The masters to whom the public education was entrusted imparted generally instruction that conveyed poison to the minds of youth, systematically turning their admiration towards the fables of Grecian mythology, or towards the heroes of ancient republics, and did not suffer them even to suspect that Christianity had also its heroes, which surpassed them all. Still more, they chose amongst profane works those which had a

more particularly corrupting influence at once over the mind and morals of youths. And, notwithstanding all that cotemporary historians have said of the corruption of that age, it is yet surprising to find among the books of which Savonarola openly demanded the suppression, in the schools, the works of Tibullus and Catullus, so licentious in their nature, and even Ovid's 'Art of Love,' which, however, may pass as an edifying work in comparison to another collection of poems, of which the title alone reveals all its infamy, and against which the sainted preacher formally demanded an edict of proscription. Behold to what extent the wickedness of the classical instructors, and the fatal blindness of the people had proceeded!

"That system of profane education was continued in another form in the higher branches of instruction in the colleges and cloisters, without excepting those of the Dominicans, although the study of school philosophy was forbidden by the rules of Saint Dominic, except in case of dispensation. The logic of Aristotle, loaded with novel subtleties, subjected the science of theology itself to its dry and coldly-systematic disputes: that is to say, the very science which, by its nature, is most independent of that description of trammels; and the authority of the Sacred Scriptures was not fully recognised, except in as much as it had the good fortune to be in accordance with that of the peripatetic philosophy. What do I say? The study of holy books, and, above all, of the Old Testament, was so shamefully neglected, that it was asked with naïveté, by the few who occupied themselves with such reading, what benefit could they derive from the knowledge of events passed and accomplished so many ages ago? A question so grossly absurd, that it would be impossible to think of it, if it had not been addressed to Savonarola himself during his noviciate, by a religious brother, otherwise highly exemplary, and animated with the best dispositions.

"Pulpit oratory itself had degenerated into purely scholastic argumentation, and preachers of repute, making an undigested farrago of the Gospel and of school logic with their heads

crammed with all the subtleties of the schools, cast this dry dust of scholastic divinity into the eyes of their hearers, without at all caring for the things of God and of the faith.

"The poor in spirit were fortunate indeed when Savonarola appeared with an abundance and a happy selection of Scriptural citations. It was in those simple souls that the echoes of Divine truths reverberated, like the claps in quick succession of a new thunder, and it seemed as if the same heavenly lightning had touched their hearts and purified his lips.

"It was not in his own name that he warned the people of near and terrible chastisements, and that he sought to cast out of science and the arts the demon of paganism by which they were possessed; it was in the name of the prophets, who had cried out, woe to whomsoever may bend his knee before idols.

"Amos was his type of that rude and energetic simplicity with which inspiration itself seems to take a pleasure to confound the science of the sages; and the prophecies of the pastor of Thecué, by the apt application which Savonarola knew well how to make of them, appeared to have mainly in view the intellectual idolatry into which Florence was then plunged.

"When speaking of the irremissible crime of the people of Israel, the prophet reproaches them with having drank in the cup of reprobates—*vinum damnatorum biberunt*—in his interpretation of the passage he declares to the Florentines that accursed drink is no other than the paganism, with all its old associations, its licentiousness, and its profane ceremonies.

"Those who swear 'by the sin of Samaria,' *qui jurant in delicto Samariæ*, are, on the one hand, the youth of Florence, whom pride encourages to run after logic and philosophy; and, on the other, the professors of theology, who knew not how to study except illusory subtleties, which furnish never-ending materials for scholastic controversies. Those also who cry out —*Live the ways of Beerschebah!—vivit via Bersabè!*—are the learned, who make for themselves an idol of science, and who do not wish to ascend to the original source of truth, except by the lights of their reason. The prohibition made by Isaac to

his son Jacob, to take a wife from among the daughters of Canaan, was a prophetic caution to Christians to forbear seeking truth in books of philosophy. Among the seven plagues of Egypt, there were at least three to which the imagination of Savonarola found reason to lend an analogous meaning. The Jews, who became tired of manna in the desert, and sighed for the flesh of Egypt, were the type of Christians who, having in their possession the word of God itself, neglected it, that they might give themselves up to profane studies. The narrative of the miraculous draught of fishes, when the Apostle Peter complained that he laboured all night in vain with his companions, that complaint, he said, applied to the unfruitfulness of modern preaching—he meant to say, that, by reason of preaching rhetoric and philosophy, the light of the faith was darkened, and a fearful night succeeded, during which the fishermen were casting their nets in vain; that is to say, without saving souls."

In the midst of a vast multitude of sermons, the spirit of God had ceased to enliven pulpit eloquence, and the preachers had become more estranged than ever from the science of the faith. With that fixed determination, and that fervour of zeal, which belonged to Savonarola, we can comprehend with what enthusiastic and pathetic earnestness at the same time he recommended to his hearers the reading of the sacred writings, or that he told them of the consolations he had derived himself from the same source.

"Believe," he would say to them, "O believe in the sufficiency of the Gospel, and wisdom of Christ, who has left you his express word, so that it can be independent of all the science of the age. It is said that logic and philosophy can strengthen the mind in the faith, as if the brightness of a superior luminary had need of being established by one of inferior power. Recollect that philosophy of the council of Nice, where the most learned bishops wished in vain to convince by syllogisms, and who afterwards allowed themselves to be persuaded by a simple believer, having addressed to the chief ones of them these remarkable words: *vobis pro verbis verba dedi.* I have given you words for words . . . . Go unto all the schools of Florence, you

will find the professors paid to teach logic and philosophy; you will there discover masters for every science and every art; but not a single one charged with instruction in the sacred Scriptures. . . . . Do you not perceive, O blinded professor, that in attempting to ground the faith upon profane sciences, you lower and degrade it, instead of elevating and doing it honour? You remember the history of David going to fight the giant Goliah; do like him: cast away this burthensome armour of yours—of logic and philosophy, and arm yourself with a lively and simple faith, according to the example of the Apostles and martyrs.* . . . . What ineffable sweetness does not a Christian soul find in the reading of the sacred Scripture! The man fatigued after the long pilgrimage of life, sometimes sits down and rests himself upon his journey, that he may refresh and strengthen himself with that viaticum; and he then enjoys, as it were, the presence of Christ, his well-beloved, and he relieves himself by the tears of affection which the sight of the mercies of God causes him to shed.† . . . . O Florence, do all against me that you will. I have ascended the pulpit this day to tell you that you cannot destroy my work, because it is the work of Christ. Whether I live or die, the seed which I have cast into the hearts of the people will not the less produce its fruit. If my enemies are powerful enough to hunt me from these walls, I will not be afflicted on that account, for I will find some spot or other in a wilderness, where I can take refuge with my Bible, and enjoy a rest that it will not be in the power of thy citizens to disturb."‡

For certain superficially philosophical minds all this is as a momentary struggle between an ignorant and fanatical monk on the one side, and on the other, a human intelligence, of which nothing could stop the progress.

Nevertheless, this monk was as versed as the most learned of his adversaries, in the profane studies which he did not wish

* Sermon on Monday after the third Sunday in Lent.
† Idem, Tuesday after fourth Sunday in Lent.
‡ Idem, Tuesday after the third Sunday in Lent.

utterly to destroy, but to make them subordinate to Christian studies. He knew as well as they did, the annals of Greece and Rome, but he did not find them either more glorious, or more instructive, than those of nations that had appeared since upon the stage of the world, displaying there the banner of the Cross.

"In antiquity itself," says Rio, "he refused pre-eminence to those who, like Livy and Thucydides, had only written a history of the past; and he claimed it for the Jewish historians, the only ones that had combined in the same book a recital of the past events, with a figurative history of the future.

"It must be owned that there was something sublime and deeply Christian-like in this repugnance for that which exists no more, and is no more to be.

"The instinct of perpetuity is inseparable from that of immortality, and the latter has been so much developed by Christianity, that the point of view is completely changed in historical studies, for those who are arrived at the fullness of that intellectual development. It is this instinct that we can remark in the unfinished essays on universal history, attempted by the ecclesiastical writers of the earlier periods of the middle ages: it is this that we can behold in every character of perfection and unity in the incomparable discourse of Bossuet; and it is this that we can find the germ of, in so many of the passages in the sermons of Savonarola.

"In order to damp the enthusiasm of the learned, who had always their attention fixed upon classical antiquity, he shows them in the East the miserable remnant of the Greek race, eaten up by a spiritual leprosy, which its schism had rendered incurable, and alike unable to shake off the yoke of barbarism or of error; in the West, far from seeking to turn away the eyes of his hearers from a spectacle of Roman splendour, he delights, on the contrary, to unroll to them an imposing picture of its grandeur and its triumphs, but it was for the purpose of making more obvious and striking afterwards, the conquest of the eternal city by Christ, who had laid all those triumphs at the feet of a humble fisherman. And then it seemed as if

he was about to chaunt the triumph of the cross, paraphrasing the words of the prophet Isaiah (as he did in his sermons on Tuesday after the second Sunday of Lent): *Civitatem sublimem humiliabit, conculcabit eam pes pauperis, gressus egenorum.* The proud city shall be humbled; it shall be trodden under the foot of the poor, and by the tread of those who are needy. In laying down a most Christian plan for public education, he did not count upon the generation who had lived in the habit of regarding the discovery of a Greek or Latin manuscript as one of the choicest blessings of heaven. It was necessary to wait until all the learned old men, of whom Savonarola had complained that he had found their hearts as hard as stone, had gone down, one after the other, into the grave; and to prepare, by institutions worthy of a Christian people, for the coming of a new generation, upon which he most earnestly invoked the blessings of God.

"One could make a most precious collection of saintly things of all the touching discourses addressed by him to the children who formed a part of his hearers.

"The sympathy of the preacher was ever most excited when he spoke to that dear and innocent portion of his flock. He called on them to manifest one day the fruit of his labour, and to keep a watch over the future destinies of their country.* But, in the meantime, he prepared for that splendid future by laying at their door all the grand truths of the faith, and by promoting salutary reforms in domestic education. He told mothers that they failed in the most sacred of their duties, by imposing the care of nourishing their infant children on hired nurses, who transmitted to them their own vices, and corrupted them even in the cradle. He told fathers that they were bound to give their sons, even under age, a degree of instruction, without which their natural dispositions could not be developed at a later period, and it was, above all, in that elementary instruction in which the study of the dead languages is comprised, that Savonarola wished to give a basis and a tendency, which should be in perfect harmony

* Sermon, third Sunday in Lent.

with the aim of Christian societies. Too full of knowledge, to have thought of forbidding the use of the great works which the ancients have left as so many illuminated tracks of their journey through the ancient world, he willingly admitted them as helps to modern civilization, and as instruments for the cultivation of imagination and taste; but the privilege of adapting such foreign decorations to the uses of our learning, ought not to prevent the foundation and completion of the edifice of education being exclusively of a Christian character.

"He approved very much of the professors of Florence setting their pupils to learn the genius of Homer, Virgil, and Cicero, without suffering the translations of these works to interpose as dark bodies between those great luminaries and the eyes of their pupils. But, as in the point of view from which he judged the genius of certain Fathers of the church, it appeared to him that some of them had more profound knowledge and elevation of views, and counterbalanced at least by that advantage for inferiority of style or form; he demanded that the best works of St. Jerome and St. Augustin, and particularly the book *of the city of God*, should be admitted on an equal footing with the profane authors, in order, said he, '*that youth shall not receive a lesson in paganism without receiving at the same time a lesson in Christianity, and that there shall be a simultaneous instruction in eloquence and truth.*'*

"It was through the same motive that he wished to sanctify the memory of children, by impressing, at the most tender period of their age, the history of saints and martyrs who had honoured the church by virtues, otherwise as heroic as those of the great heroes of Plutarch."†

* Sermon, Tuesday after the third Sunday of Lent.

† La Poesie Chretienne, par A. F. Rio, pp. 310, *et seq.* 8vo. *Par.* 1836.

CHAPTER XX.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF CHRISTIAN ART TO SAVONAROLA.

"Of the pagan scholars and philosophers of his own times, Tully said, 'Delirant plerumque scriptores in libris suis,' their lives being opposite to their words. They commended poverty to others, and were most covetous themselves, extolled love and peace, and yet persecuted one another with virulent hate and malice. They could give precepts for verse and prose, but not a man of them (as Seneca tells them home) could moderate his affections. Their music did show us *flabiles modos*, &c. how to rise and fall; but they could not so contain themselves, as in adversity not to make a lamentable tone. They will measure ground by geometry, set down limits, divide and subdivide, but cannot yet prescribe *quantum homini satis*, or keep within compass of reason and discretion. They can square circles, but understand not the state of their own souls—describe right lines and crooked, &c., but know not what is right in this life—*quid invitâ rectum sit, ignorant*."—BURTON'S *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

MONSIEUR CARLIER, of the Société Royale des Antiquaires de France, to whom I am indebted for a copy of the engraving of the medallion of Savonarola, which exists in the "Académie des Inscriptions" of Paris, and which is prefixed to this volume, has written an admirable article, entitled "Esthétique de Savonarola," published in the "Annales Archeologiques" of November, 1847. In this paper, Monsieur Carlier considers the life and character of Savonarola chiefly in relation to his efforts for the advancement of Christian art. In his opinion, art is as varied as the thought of man; it may be devoted to objects not of a religious nature, but, when so devoted, it is not true to its high destiny, and it loses in power and in nature. Beyond the circle of religious ideas, which are connected with all that is noble in man's aspirations, we have to do only with individual, local, or transitory ideas. It is the destiny, and the duty, and the glory of

art to devote itself to the illustration of religious ideas: all other ideas are limited by time and space. Take away religion from an ancient monument, and you have only the carcass of some architectural celebrity of old. The Pantheon in Paris was instinct with life, and the holy influence of the poetry of faith when the shrine of the poor peasant girl of sainted memory brought humble piety to that Christian temple, and countless pilgrims to its altars; but what has it become since it has been converted into a place of deposit for the ashes of the great men of the world?—a vast sepulchre, without anything sacred in its aspect or destination. When the Cross does not crown the cenotaph, nothing is left but a pagan tomb.

The school of mysticism and idealism manifests a reaction against the school of materialism and naturalism. The former was for a short time triumphant in Florence, while Fra Angelico, of Fiesole, and Benozzo Gozzoli communicated to their pencil the holy influences of spirituality, derived from the ecstasies of contemplative prayer. But Christian art soon declined under influences of a different sort. Towards the close of the fifteenth century, Florence sunk under the despotism of Mammon interests. The Banking people of Florence literally governed the government; and wherever money obtains the mastery over mind in a republic, the handmaids of Liberty must be gained over to its cause, and, being corrupted, they become degraded and debased. Literature and art are wanted on the side of Mammon, to give a sort of prestige to its power; and, in ranging themselves there, they lose their spirituality, and become sensual as well as servile and sordid. Gold is more fatal to them than iron; the iron wounds only the body, but the weapon that is made of gold penetrates to the very soul; and this power of corruption is the peril that the Gospel tells us is chiefly to be feared.

The riches and the profane learning of the Medici had a mischievous influence on art in Florence. The Medici are erroneously said to have revived the taste for all that is admirable in Pagan antiquity, that prevailed in their time. That statement is unfounded. The monuments of antiquity, long before they

immerged from obscurity into opulence and splendour, had admirers, protectors, and preservers, at the head-quarters of the Christian Chuch. Wherever the Christian sanctuary existed, Pagan art and literature found a generous hospitality and a sure asylum.

"The fathers (says Mons. Carlier) were on familiar terms with the poets and philosophers of antiquity. We find ample evidence of the fact in the writings of Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, and many others. St. Thomas of Aquinas, the Angel of the Schools, condescended to walk sometimes in the academic groves of the old philosophers, leaning even on the arm of Aristotle, or talking with amenity to Plato, and among laymen, in later times, who had gone to the infernal regions in search of deep philosophy, and who had turned to a poor account their wisdom in this world, had not Dante for his guide, his friend of Mantua—the poet Virgil. By the Medici antiquity was *exploitèe*, only on the side of sensuality. Their love for Pagan art was not a classic taste, but a voluptuous passion. In literature, Ovid, Catullus, and Tibullus, were in greater favour with them than Homer, Cicero, or Cæsar. Their celebrated garden at Florence became the sanctuary of a *nude naturalisme* in art. Developments in form, that manifested physical perfection, and realized all the ideas of prurient paganism, in statues of divinities who presided of old over the orgies of unbridled licentiousness and vice;—these largely attracted admiration, and found a species of worship in obsequious eulogistic criticism, and poetry, and even philosophic contemplation.

"But while Politian was reciting Platonic verses in the shade beneath the trellised arches, in the garden of Lorenzo de Medici, surrounded by paganism in art, and in the tastes and feelings of his auditory, the friends and followers of Lorenzo, Savonarola was in the pulpit of San Marco, crying out with a strong voice and a stout heart against paganism in religion, manners, art, and education. We find scattered through the sermons and tracts of Savonarola a mass of observation of the highest value, on the necessity of a great reform in art and literature. His idea of the divine mission of art and literature was based on his theory of

the nature and perfections of the Deity, founded on that which St. Thomas of Aquinas had reduced into a formula, in the 'sum' of all theology.

"The grand proposition which pervades this theory, variously expressed in his different compositions, is, that God is the first cause; and that Eternity and Unity are the most manifest indications of Omnipotence.

"Then it follows, he declares, that as every thing comes from God, so every thing is for Him, in the visible and the invisible world. God has created the universe for the contemplation of his powers and perfections. The beatitude of heaven is in contemplation. The infinite perfections of God appear in creation *as traces* of power on the face of the heavens, and in the harmony of all the spheres.

"The divine principle of Order, which governs suns and stars innumerable, and determines the form and force of every atom in the universe, affords humanity a glimpse of the divine wisdom.

"The Providence which watches over the herbs of the fields, and the insects that subsist there, makes known His goodness. But God, for a special manifestation of that goodness, created man in his own image. That is to say, the soul of man, in its spiritual nature, is an image of the Deity. The spiritual effluence, with the divine image in it, has been committed to our care—and freedom of will is given us for the charge of it, in order that it may return of itself to its Author, after having voluntarily yielded a due homage here to its Creator.

"That image, being deformed by original sin, the injury to it was repaired by grace, and brought to a state fitted one day to be completely restored by the beatific vision. God became man, that we might easily recover that resemblance to him which had been lost; so far as our finite faculties will permit, we are to endeavour to form to ourselves an idea in this life of the blessed Trinity which is to be realised in the next.

"The form of a society in this theory of Savonarola, is the law which constitutes and governs it. The form of man, in the same sense, is the reasoning soul, which controls thought and com-

bines matter. The form of a work of art is, therefore, the idea of the artist.

"The form of art itself is the faith which it inspires.

"In fine, the form of Christian art—is God—is Jesus Christ, as known to us by the Gospel and the Church.

"Savonarola proposed to himself, in art, a *beau ideal* divine and infinite—the type of which is Jesus Christ, his God-head and humanity combined—which is 'the form of regenerated humanity.'

"Then comes the strongest resemblance in an image that he can conceive to that Divine Saviour—the likeness of the blessed Virgin. How is it manifested, and how is it to be expressed?

"By purity pre-eminently chaste and immaculate, that, like the face of a brilliant mirror exquisitely polished, causes every breath that approaches it to vanish from its surface, as if it was driven off by some wonderfully active repelling influence.

"The purest of created beings should therefore be accounted the queen of art, of which she should even be the inspiration and the model. The beauty of the soul it should be the task and the glory of the painter and the sculptor to express in all their efforts to personify sanctity and Christian heroism. To promote religious feelings should be the object of all art.

"Christian art is not to be exercised for the mere purpose of adorning churches, but with the view of promoting a great patriotic and humanizing purpose, to make the inhabitants of the state or city we abide in, a Christian people, in order to render them happy in this world, and triumphant in the next.

"The great element of patriotism, in Savonarola's opinion, is religion.

"One of the great means, as he thought, of rendering religion pure, the state secure, and the people far removed from sensuality and discontent, was to Christianize art and humanize men by it.

"Savonarola wanted art for the people. Art was intended by God, he considered, to teach them, and to afford them pleasure."*

* Carlier, Æsthetiques de Savonarola.

"Therefore, in all his reforms, unlike others calling themselves reformers, he never proscribed art; but he denounced the licentiousness of it. He demanded even artistic enjoyments and spectacles for the people, magnificent religious festivals and processions.

"He believed that the working classes on festival days, their only days of rest from labour, required relaxation and innocent recreation, and that God's honour was more promoted by their happiness than by the monopoly of all privileges on the part of the rich and powerful, and the pretence that industry, morality, or authority were hurt by the innocent enjoyment of the industrious and moral poor.

"Savonarola thought that art was a want of the people calculated to make them happy—that it was intended by God they should be so: that it was good for them, and for the state, that they should have their recreations and enjoyments as well as the rich; that they should share in intellectual refining agencies; that they should exult in the triumphs of Christian art; that they should sing joyfully too of their sure hopes in Christ, and their glory in his government over them and their republic.

"Drunkenness, and sensuality, and profanity were overcome by Savonarola, and the triumph endured for some years during his life—nay, for upwards of thirty years after his death, the traces of it were to be witnessed in Florence.

"Is it no exaggeration in sentiment or in language to say that humanity owes more to the memory of the poor friar of Ferrara, of the fifteenth century, than to the merits of all the military heroes of Europe put together, who have flourished during the last 400 years?

"From the scattered germs of great thoughts throughout the works of Savonarola, we learn that the aim and end of man's life is, to seek to recover or retain a resemblance to that divine original. Man's spirit then is to aspire to a similitude with Divine Truth in the person of the Father, with the beautiful from all eternity, which is manifested in the Son, with the good supremely beneficent which proceeds from the Divine Truth and the eternal beauty, and is embodied in the Holy Ghost.

"The Trinity has a correspondence with the trinity of man's spirit, intelligence, and will, which should combine all its powers to meditate on God, to reproduce and retain the image of his truth, beauty, and goodness in our minds."

Such is the theory which we find dispersed through the sermons and the treatises of Savonarola in this necessarily brief but faithful resumé of his opinions on the subject of art in relation to religion.

Florence, says Dr. Hafe, at the time of Fra Girolamo's first appearance in the pulpit of St. Mark's, was Pagan in its tastes, its arts, its manners, and its morals. To reform the latter, the great Dominican deemed it necessary to labour to effect a reformation in the former. "Arts," said Savonarola, "henceforth must be handmaids of piety and freedom."*

Two writers eminently qualified to treat of the subject of Art in its relations with Religion, have entered fully into the labours of Savonarola for its restoration and purification, and the proscription of the Paganism that prevailed in it in his time, in the adornment of Italian churches.

One of these works, entitled "La Poesie en l'Art," written by Monsieur Rio, well deserves to be translated into English. The other, "Vite Delle Pittori Scultori e Architetti Dell' Ordine de San Domenico," by Padre Marchese, of the same order, has been admirably translated by the Reverend Charles Meehan.

As the work of Rio is least known to English readers, though of equal merit with the other, I refer to it chiefly, for the account of Savonarola's labours for Art in its relations with Religion. At the onset of this undertaking, we are told by Rio:—

"The evil caused by the many abuses which had crept into public education was aggravated and reproduced in a form still more dangerous, by artists devoted to all the profane inspirations that proceeded from their patrons and others.

"Monuments of pagan art having become the object of a sort of worship in the gardens of the Medici, had insensibly altered

* Neue Propheten, p. 324.

the notions of the *beautiful* such as Christian painters and sculptors had conceived at that time.

"On the other hand, *naturalism*, encouraged by the increased corruption of morals, had openly taken possession of the holy places, and the profanation committed by Lippus, the monk, renewed iself every day; that is to say, that instead of the Madonna, the Magdalen, and even Saint John, there were altar-pieces put up with portraits of young girls, in most cases too well known, around which people often crowded without any respect for the holy sacrifice,—a turbulent concourse of the inquisitive and profane.

"In these sorts of representations everything was calculated to deprave the imagination of the beholders: attractive naked figures were exhibited without any regard to decency, and not only did they disregard the traditional costume of the Virgin and of holy women, but traits and attire were given to them which made them resemble courtezans.

"That was the reproach that Savonarola addressed to artists, with a tone of the strongest indignation, asking them by what right they came to parade the fruit of their own vanity in the churches? and never thinking that he had urged on them sufficiently, that the Blessed Virgin should be represented clad simply and modestly like a poor girl, and that the heavenly beauty of her countenance should be, as it were, the reflection of the sanctity of her soul—that beauty which made Saint Thomas say, 'that no man had ever regarded it with eyes of concupiscence.' It appears that this sort of licentiousness had already caused many ravages, since Savonarola affirms that, if artists had known as he did, all the scandal which was given to innocent minds, they would have had a horror of their own work.

"Nevertheless, their pencils were still more licentious when they worked at the decoration of palaces or particular houses. It was there that paganism ran a free course, and made thoughts enter into the minds of children by the eyes, which elsewhere entered by the ears. The Madonnas which they placed in Oratories, instead of edifying the family that had assembled to pray,

produced often a contrary effect; and if a pious citizen, in his paternal solicitude, expressed his disgust at lascivious images, and asked for the representation of a Virgin whose look, age, and character, should be a preservative from all impure thoughts, then the perverse artist has been known to paint the same figure for him with a flowing beard.*

"The sacrifice of all nakedness which shocked modesty in its most sacred asylum, that is to say, even under the eyes of mothers, was the first pledge that Savonarola exacted from parents converted by his teaching, opposing to their remissness in a matter of such importance the severity of Aristotle, who, with only the lights of pagan philosophy, had been enlightened enough to note in his *policy*, the danger which arose from placing improper representations before the eyes of children.

"But to what purpose would the destruction of profane monuments be, if the principle which gave them birth was not attacked in its very root, and if the imagination was not finally freed from the anti-Christian influence it exercised over the mind? To attempt such a work, one of the most difficult of which there is mention in the history of the human mind, nothing less than the genius of Savonarola, and his firm belief in the divinity of his mission, was necessary. Without recurring to the long processes of the analytical method of reasoning, it was seen by him, that the decline of the fine arts was principally attributable to the decline of religion among Christians, and the conclusion was drawn, that the regeneration of the one necessarily conduced to that of the others. His aim was to inculcate, in the most forcible manner he could, on his hearers the necessity of interior worship in its relation to the wants of the soul, and to explain to the people the lofty meaning of the ceremonies practised in the Catholic Church, and the sublime part that art was called on to play in it, in putting forward its true meaning in all its clearness, whether allegorical or mystical, of so many customs and institutions, suitably comprehensible to the most simple understandings. He opened to artists a mine as pure as it was

* The artist referred to was named Nunziata.

prolific, which their predecessors were far from exhausting. But upon this point the aged did not show themselves less obstinately fixed in their ideas than on that part of profane literature, and their example was almost generally followed by those who came immediately after them.

"It was, then, only with the generations placed between what is properly called childhood and adolescence, that Savonarola placed his hopes for the future—hopes which he cherished eight years consecutively, with a fondness without a parallel, and which supported him often in trials the most severe, which the implacable hatred of his enemies exposed him to.

"To prepare and insure the triumph of art, poetry, and Christian faith for a new era, which should open gloriously with the sixteenth century, and in Florence, above all other places, by reason of its spiritual riches—this was the object that Savonarola proposed to himself, when impregnating the heart and imagination of youth with that exquisite odour of tender and infantile piety, the sweetness of which prolonged itself far into after-life.

"His success so far exceeded his expectations, that he himself thought he could not attribute it to any cause but the miraculous intervention of the Divine mercy, and he was never more moved than in the effusion of his acknowledgment of the author of that benefit.

"We see by many passages in his sermons, that the innocence of early childhood seemed to inspire him with I know not what exalted sentiment, that resembled adoration. He says, that a child who is preserved without sin, after he has arrived at the age of reason and the exercise of free-will, has acquired a purity of heart and soul so great, that the angels of heaven often come to commune with him. With such feelings was it, that by that dear portion of his auditory, he caused prayers to be addressed to God, to obtain for him strength on one occasion, when he felt himself quite exhausted, and on another, when he desired that there might be virtuous magistrates chosen for Florence, when they proceeded to the new elections,"*

* Rio, Poesie Chretienne, pp. 324. *et seq.*

"We need not wonder," continues Rio, "then, at finding artists and poets among the most devoted partizans of Savonarola; for it was in their ranks that he might be expected to excite the most lively sympathy, not only because his eloquence emitted sparks of intelligence that communicated with the fire of their souls, but still more, because he made them reascend to the elevated position they had occupied, and from which they had been insensibly descending. I do not think that there has ever been a hero in history whose name has been transmitted to posterity with a more imposing association of illustrious men of every class, and we can hardly persuade ourselves that it is a question of the influence of a simple monk, when we enumerate philosophers, poets, and artists of every description, architects, sculptors, painters, and engravers, who offered themselves almost wholly to him with enthusiasm, to be, each one in his own particular way, the docile instruments of his grand social reform.

"At their head was placed the famous John Pico of Mirandola, that man of universal knowledge, who had long before encompassed and encouraged so many wonderful things when he met with Savonarola, but who remained stupified at the new prodigy the first time he listened to that extraordinary man. As he was the friend of Lorenzo di Medici, his admiration will not be suspected, and this circumstance imparts equally great weight to the testimony of Angelo Politian, who, in spite of his predilection for profane literature, the object of Savonarola's invectives, could not forbear from representing him as a man truly remarkable for his sanctity, as well as for his science—as one who preached a heavenly doctrine with rare eloquence.

"The canon, Beneviene, a Platonic poet, very closely allied with the court and the literary tastes of the Medici, did not the less boldly publish, at the time when the storm began to gather over the head of the preacher, a most energetic defence of his doctrines and his prophecies.

"But of all classes of citizens to which he was indebted for the greatest number of champions devotedly attached to his

cause, the artists assuredly furnished most. Among those he found not only friends, but apostles and martyrs. One portion aspired to the glory of dying with him—the other, regarding the light of art extinguished when he died, wished, in the excess of their grief, to clothe their genius with eternal mourning. All persevered in their enthusiasm even to the end; thus honouring their profession and the human race by a fidelity which the triumph of their enemies rendered difficult and even dangerous.

"In surveying the different branches of art, from the lowest step even to the highest summit, we discover that Savonarola not only had made conquests all through, but even that he had triumphed over the most distinguished artists. The most finished works of the first celebrated engraver on stone—*graveur en pierre*—which was produced in Italy, is a bust of Savonarola, which is yet to be seen in Florence.*

"The most worthy successors of Masso Finiguerra, the inventor of engraving, towards the middle of the fifteenth century, were Baldini and Botticelli; the first of whom never disgraced his art by a licentious or profane work, and the second, otherwise celebrated as a painter and commentator of Dante, engraved the *triumph of the faith* of Savonarola, with a perfection he had never approached in his other works, and he pushed his enthusiasm for his hero so far, that at his death he renounced for ever his profession, firmly resolved rather to die of want than to use his pencil more.

"Lorenzo di Credi, without signalising himself by any such extreme resolve, brought (in the memory of Savonarola) the tribute of a talent pure, and exclusively nourished by religious inspirations, and his name is by so much more precious among those of the reformers, as he represented the lively and original school of André Verocchio, to which Leonardo di Vinci already belonged.

"There was in the convent of Saint Marc a miniature painter named *Fra Benedetto*, heir of the traditions which the blessed

* The sculptor was Giovanni della Corniole. Vide Title Page.

Angelo of Fiesole had left: he was the most couragcous and devoted of all. On the day that the *Tepidi* party besieged the church, demanding with shouts of rage the death of Savonarola, Frà Benedetto armed himself from head to foot to defend him, and desisted only from the defence when his master told him that monks had no right to have recourse to any but spiritual weapons; and, at the moment that the assailants, after penetrating into the cloister, carried away their victim before the judges, who had their sentence of death all prepared previously, it was necessary for Savonarola to use, for the last time of all, his authority as prior, in order to prevent this generous monk from coming to die along with him.

"Baccio della Porta was also on that day in the convent of St. Marc, with five hundred citizens who had come from without, to lend their strong hand against the aggressors. He had been an assiduous hearer of Savonarola's sermons, and no artist had entered more completely than he did into the views of Fra Girolamo respecting the Reform in Art. Thus his discouragement was extreme, when he saw that extraordinary movement terminate by the ignominious end of him who gave it birth. Neither art nor glory having henceforth any charms for him, his imagination oppressed and all its freshness faded, he buried his talents in the convent of Prato, where he took the religious habit in 1500, and it is on that account he is better known in history by the name of Fra Bartolomeo.

"Luca della Robbia, inventor of a new process for preserving bas-reliefs in all their freshness, founded in his own family a mystical school of art, original and so fruitful, that we may say it filled Tuscany with his works. His two brothers, Augustin and Octavian, were his first pupils, but they did him much less credit than his nephew, André della Robbia, who, in figures of angels, the Virgin, and saints, seemed always inspired by the tastes and traditions *ombriennes*, and this it was that rendered him more accessible than any other Florentine sculptor to the impressions which Savonarola sought to produce in all Christian artists. His success in the house of André was immense: two

of his sons embraced a religious life in the convent of San Marco, where they received the habit of the order from the hands of the prior himself, and the three others, remaining in their father's studio, assisted him to execute the profile on medallions of the monk whom they considered a new prophet.

"The stranger who goes over the streets of Florence to admire monuments of every kind, stops to observe, among all the others, a palace of grandiose architecture, the entablature of which, also remarkable for its grandeur, is justly regarded as one of the greatest wonders of the fine arts in the world. That curious building is the palace of Strozzi, and the man who decorated the top of that splendid crown was the architect Cronaca, the bosom friend of the monk Savonarola, whose doctrines and destiny took such possession of his mind, that, in his old days, it was impossible for him to speak on any other subject; on which account it was, that Vasari said a sort of madness had seized upon his brain.

"A multitude of conversions not less remarkable took place in the other classes of the citizens. Among military men, we may remark the name of Maro Salviati, who, in the day of danger, went to the side of Savonarola, in defiance of the angry looks of his most infuriated enemies, and who, in the public square, dared to mark out a line with his lance, which he forbade the furious populace to pass.

"Among the nobility of Florence there were traits of devotion no less chivalrous, among others the conduct of the brave and pious Valori, who at the moment that he called the people to arms to defend him whom he always called the *Pastor of Florence*, was basely assassinated by the vile agents of the faction, and his wife and child were murdered also."*

Padre Marchese, owning his obligations to the work of Rio, makes the following just observations on the same subject:

"None but those who have perused the chronicles of the Convent of St. Marco, could believe what numbers of the Florentine nobility hastened to enrol themselves under the banner

* La Poesie Chretienne, par Rio, pp. 331. *et seq.*

of St. Dominic, in order to be near to this wonderful man. But that which exceeds all powers of imagination is the influence which he exercised over the Florentine artists. Vasari compares it to a delirium, so great was his power over their hearts and souls; for they not only adopted all his ideas of what should be the moral tendency of art, but also declared themselves ready to suffer any amount of toil, and to confront the rage of a brutal faction, sooner than abandon him in the tremendous struggle that he maintained for his country and her arts. Some of them paid dearly for their devotion, for they either fell beneath the assassin's stiletto or were driven into exile. Others, when the terrible tragedy was ended, abandoned the cultivation of these arts, which formed their delight during the life-time of Fra Girolamo. The history of these facts is given by men who were not the partisans of Savonarola, but by the creature of the Medici, Giorgio Vasari, who confesses himself unable to account for that mighty influence which Fra Girolamo exercised over the most distinguished geniuses of his times.

"The artists who adopted Savonarola's ideas were by far the most distinguished men of the Florentine school in all the branches of design; and there is not one who will not admit the great excellence of Giovanni delle Corniole, as an engraver on stone; of Baldini and Sandro Botticelli, in copper-plate engraving; of Cronaca, in architecture; of the Robbia family, in all the branches of the plastic art; of Baccio da Monte Lupo, in sculpture; of Baccio della Porta and Lorenzo di Credi, in painting; and of Bettuccio and Eustachio, of Florence, in miniaturing. And the very same motive that induced many of the Florentine nobility to retire from the world, and pass their days with that singular man, impelled many an artist to ask the habit at his hands. Elsewhere we shall see what numbers were invested by him in the convent of St. Marco, and in that of Fiesole.

"Surrounded by such a galaxy of artists and literati, Savonarola began to unfold his ideas to both. His object was to convert the literary man from infidelity, and to impress him with the proper notions of Christianity. As to the artists, the scope

of all his reasonings was to rescue the imitative arts from that immoral tendency, which was so much encouraged by the licentiousness of the times; for they not only delighted in depicting the *nude*, and representing foulest abominations, but treated with contempt the very subjects suggested by religion itself. Nothing was then more common than to select women of depraved life as originals for portraits of the Madonna and other Saints; nor need we say that such practices brought dishonour on religion and scandalised the faithful. It is true, indeed, that abuses of this sort were still more flagrant in the following century, in the days of Giulio Romano, Tiziano, and Coreggio, but the far-seeing eye of the Ferrarese clearly beheld the debasement which should inevitably prevail, if he did not warn the cultivators of art of the ignominy with which they would cover themselves, and of the direful evils that would befal their country, if they devoted their genius to propagate such foul contamination. Alas! they knew not that corruption always precedes the loss of liberty; and they took little heed of that maxim which we read in Tacitus—that the easiest way to conquer and enslave a people is to debauch it. Was it not thus that the Romans subjugated Britain, Gaul, and Germany? It was against men of this class that Savonarola thundered from the pulpit, and he also predicted the tremendous evils which they were likely to bring on his country. It may be that the future was revealed to him, and that he beheld the Imperialists besieging Florence. Who knows but that he saw in prophetic vision the last struggle of the Republic, which, despite of valour and chivalry, lapsed once more into the power of the Medicean tyrants! Knowing the power which the imitative arts exercised over that imaginative people, and that they might be made instrumental in the social reform, he set about developing his ideas of them, by going back to the general principles of æsthetics, and giving a new definition of the beautiful. This, he maintained, should not be understood to be a mere pleasing of the senses, but the senses should be the media for conveying it to the heart and soul, and enamouring it of virtue. He never would separate his ideal of the beautiful from that of truth and

decorum. Perhaps it may be better to hear himself—'In what does beauty consist? In colouring? no—In form? no—but beauty is a form that results from the proportion and correspondency of all the members and colours; and from this proportion there results a quality which philosophers term beauty. This is true in compound entities, but in simple ones their beauty is the light. Behold the sun; its beauty consists in possessing light: behold the blessed spirits, the beauty of whom is *light:* behold God, who, because he is most lucid, is beauty itself. The beauty of every creature is the more perfect, the more closely it is assimilated to the beauty of God; and the body is beautiful in proportion to the beauty of the soul. Suppose two women whose bodies are equally beautiful—fancy one of them to be of holy life, and the other immoral; you will find that the holy woman will be more loved by every one than the wicked woman, and that all eyes will be turned on her. I now speak of carnal men.—Suppose a holy man, whose body is deformed, you will find that every one respects him, and, although deformed, his sanctity seems to be reflected in his countenance. Now fancy what must have been the beauty of the Virgin, who possessed such sanctity—sanctity that shone from all her features. Imagine how beautiful was Christ, who was God and Man!' Every one must perceive that the Angelico realised all these theories; for no painter ever excelled him in giving to his images the beauty of an immortal soul. Having given these general notions of the *Beautiful,* Savonarola proceeds to denounce the licentiousness of artists, who made painting subservient to the lusts of the great, instead of an eloquent language for inculcating virtue and morality; and, to overwhelm them with shame, he quotes a Gentile author. 'Aristotle,' he exclaims, 'who was a Pagan, tells us that we should not tolerate indecent pictures, lest children, seeing them, be corrupted; but what shall I say of you, Christian painters, who produce these nude figures? I tell you to do so no more.—You, who have such paintings in your houses, should destroy them, for you would thus be doing a work pleasing to God and the Holy Virgin.' Directing his discourse

to those who selected as models for portraits of the saints, women whose profligacy was well known to every one, after quoting the passage in Amos (c. v.)—'But you carried a tabernacle for your Moloch, and the image of your idols,'—he pronounces the following invective: 'You have dedicated my temple and my churches to your god, Moloch. See how they act in Florence! When Florentine mothers have married their daughters, they deck them out for show, till they look like nymphs; and they lead them forthwith to Santa Liberata (the cathedral). These are your idols that you have placed in my temple. The images of your gods are the images and the likenesses of the figures that you cause to be painted in the churches; and the young men say to this and that maiden, 'This is Magdalene; that beyond there is St. John:' because you paint figures in the church which resemble this woman or that. All this is sinful, and a contempt of God. You painters act wrongly; and if you knew the scandal that results, as I know it, you would not paint such things. You introduce worldly vanities into the church. Do you believe that the Blessed Virgin was dressed as you represent her? I tell you that she was modestly dressed, and so veiled that one could scarcely see her face; and St. Elizabeth was also modest and simple in her attire. You would do well if you would cancel these indecent pictures. You represent the Virgin Mary decked out like a harlot. Oh, how is God's worship debased!' It is easy to conjecture what effect such discourses as these had on the minds of the Florentine artists, many of whom swore to Savonarola that they would never again degrade the art of painting or sculpture. Not content with this, Baccio della Porta (called in religion Fra Bartolomeo), Lorenzo di Credi, and others, laid at the Father's feet all their designs in the *nude*, together with their other works which outraged decency."*

* Lives of the most eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects, of the order of Saint Dominick, translated from the Italian of Father Vincent Marchese, by Reverend Charles Meehan, vol. i. pp. 323 to 329, 8vo. *Dub.* 1852.

CHAPTER XXI.

ORIGIN OF THE ANIMOSITY OF ALEXANDER THE SIXTH AGAINST SAVONAROLA.—EFFORTS TO GAIN HIM OVER TO THE VIEWS OF ALEXANDER.—SECRET INTRIGUES AGAINST HIM.—INTERCEPTED CORRESPONDENCE WITH CHRISTIAN PRINCES, URGING ON THEM THE NECESSITY OF CALLING A GENERAL COUNCIL FOR THE RENOVATION OF THE CHURCH.—PROHIBITION TO PREACH.—CITATION TO ROME.—EXCOMMUNICATION.—1496 TO 1498.

"Percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves gregis."—*S. Mat.*

"Many dogs have encompassed me about, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, they evilly wrest my words, and say, I have scandalously attacked the papal authority; but many thousands among my hearers will testify to what I have said; and among my numerous published writings and sermons, my words lie before the eyes of all."—*Sermon of Savonarola.*

THE first citation of the Pope, addressed to Savonarola, was dated the 21st of July, 1495. In the terms of this mandate there is no harshness to complain of, no asperity of language, or apparent unkindly or hostile feelings exhibited. The probability is, that no feelings of that kind were then entertained by the Pope towards the friar.

The letters of Fra Girolamo to the French sovereign, urging the assembling of a general council, had not been then intercepted and sent to Rome.

In the citation we read: that "his holiness had, with joy and gratitude to God, received information that Savonarola had, with other labourers, shown himself very active in the vineyard of the Lord. Nor did he doubt but that he advantageously employed the power of the Divine Spirit for the salvation of the common people. But it had at the same time been reported,

that he foretold future events, and this not by naturally acquired knowledge, but by means of Divine revelation; hence he desired, as it belonged to his pastoral office, to speak with him on the subject, in order, if it was of God, to be better acquainted with him; and commanded him therefore, by the power of holy obedience, to come as soon as might be to Rome, where he would receive him with paternal love."

Savonarola, when he received this mandate, it is stated by Burlamacchi, was confined to his convent, attended by his physician. It is very possible he may have expected the citation, for he was kept, by some secret agency there is no doubt, well informed of all important movements in the court of Rome. This is not expressly stated by any of his biographers, but the fact is quite evident, from the allusions he makes to the life of Alexander, in his letters to the sovereigns of France, Spain, Germany, and Hungary, and in his sermons and his other writings also.

In one of his discourses at this time, disclaiming all intention of disobedience to the Church, and of disrespect for its *legitimate* authority, he asks, "What is to be done?" and he answers in the same breath, "Write to Rome, that the Pope can help the Church. Let him even by his good example admonish her of the evils that beset her. If the Pope enquire—what says that man of my life? answer nothing! If he asks further—knows he of it? answer—truly, he does right well! Tell him that he should so influence men by his example and precept, that they may be converted. If that be impossible, there is no safety left; that is all we have to say to the Pope."

Savonarola replied to the citation in terms of submissiveness and conciliation, declaring his fidelity to the Church and see of Peter, and complaining of those inimical to him, who had misled his holiness in regard to his labours in the pulpit, and pleading illness for his inability to proceed to Rome.

To a later communication on the same subject, but more strongly animadverting on his writings and sermons, he replied, in terms of unqualified submission:—

"Dignetur Sanctitas vestræ mihi communicare quod ex omnibus quæ dixi et scripsi sit revocandum, et ego et libentissime faciam, nam hac vice et semper sunt dixi et etiam scripsi me ipsum et omnia mea dicta subjicio correctioni."*

It was generally reported, that this citation was also accompanied by a formal prohibition to preach in public. But no such prohibition came, as Rians states, before the end of the same year 1495, not the middle of the new year, as Mr. Heraut mentions.

The first use Fra Girolamo made of restored health, after receiving the first citation, was to preach at San Marco, and to disabuse the public with respect to this report, and to make some very significant observations as to the obligations which lay on himself and the duties which the office of a true Pope imposed on him, in the event of misrepresentations being still made at Rome against him by his enemies, for preaching the gospel to his people.

A little later, a brief arrived from Rome, prohibiting Fra Girolamo from preaching publicly *in Florence* without assigning any specific reasons for the prohibition, but general complaints of novelty of style and dissensions occasioned by it. Savonarola suspended his labours in the pulpit. But the Government appealed to the pontiff, and solicited the suppression of the brief, through their diplomatic agent at the court of Rome, pleading the mischief done to the interests of religion, order, and morality, by the cessation of the missionary labours of Fra Girolamo; the prohibition was conditionally withdrawn. License was accorded to Fra Girolamo to preach the ensuing Lent of 1496, in Florence. The date of this license is the 28th January, 1496.†

He resumed his labours with an amount of vigour in his denunciations against ecclesiastical abuses, such as he never before displayed.

The conditional license to preach, after some months was withdrawn.

* Savon. Epist. ad. Alex. Ap. Opus. Del. Reg. Degli. Stati, cum. vi. Vit. Sav. Anon. *Pisa*, 12mo. 1818.

† Lettere Inedite di Sav. et Arch. Hist. Ital.

"The Pope," says Nardi, "was not originally hostile to the friar, moreover he was favourably disposed to that form of government *of all*, 'Governo universale,' which had been introduced by the friar."* But, alas! no redeeming trait are we to find in this preference of Alexander the Sixth for a popular form of government: Nardi adds, "the Pope thought he had more to fear from a government consolidated in its power, like that of the Medici, it being vested in the hands of a few, than from one administered by many."

Fra Girolamo received a second citation in 1496, which, Nardi says, was accompanied with a menace of excommunication in the event of a refusal to obey it, or failing so to do; and menaces were also addressed to the government, of excommunication, and an interdict, in the event of their failing to oblige the friar to proceed to Rome.

When the brief was obtained from the Pope, prohibiting Savonarola from preaching in Florence, and directing him to preach in Lucca during the ensuing Lent, before abandoning the pulpit in Florence, and that city altogether, as he purposed doing on receiving the Pope's first brief, we are informed by Nardi, in a sermon which he intended for his last discourse in Florence, he announced his intention of quitting Florence, in conformity with the wishes of his superiors, and he took his leave of the congregation in words of an impressive and affecting character.

It would appear that Savonarola must have received some notification of the first citation some months previously to July, 1495, for he preached a very remarkable sermon on the 17th of February, 1495, from which the following passages are taken:—

"I see people are desirous of knowing why I have refrained for some time from preaching, and suspended my labours. Numbers of persons say they know the cause well; an excommunication has been fulminated, and I am silenced. Were such the case, which cannot be shewn to be so, it may be remembered that I said in this place, if it came it would be of no avail, and the fabricators of falsehoods would not be served by it.

* Nardi, Hist. Fior. t. 1, p. 31.

"You shall hear in a parable of a citizen who had a large vineyard, which under the care of his son produced much fruit. Some robbers in the vicinity determined on ravaging this vineyard. But the son who took care of it kept them at bay, and preserved the possession; so they wrote to his father, who was afar off, and said, 'Your son is given to riot and debauchery, and he is bringing ruin on your posterity.'

"And they sent people of supposed worth and reputation to confirm these statements. The father, who lived afar off, and could have no personal knowledge of his son's doings, gave credit to the false reports, and sent word to that son to come to him: but the son perceiving clearly the drift of that report, and that the vineyard must go to ruin if he abandoned it, obeyed not the order, but wrote to his father that he had been wrongfully accused by slanderers. I ask you now, did that son seem to you to have done well or ill, or to have fulfilled or not the intentions of his father? . . .

"You who write so many lies to Rome, what will you write next? That I have said the Pope shall not be obeyed, and that I will not obey him? Ah! were the Lord of the vineyard here, and saw the fruits of your devices, truly he would set small value on your writings, and more especially if you were known to him.

"When we want to speak with God we speak with the heart, for God is a spirit, and dwells in the hearts of the faithful, and sees all our thoughts and inclinations. And when our tongue speaks with God, the conceptions of the heart and inward breathings of the soul are put into the form, and endowed with the power of speech."

There is something more touching than can be well expressed in the admission of the difficulties and troubles which are beginning now to surround and overpower him. "I am come to a deep sea, and now long for the haven once more, and I look all around me for it, and I see no possibility of returning. I will say to thee, as the Prophet Jeremiah said, 'Lord, thou hast persuaded me, and I have let myself be persuaded. Thou hast

been too strong for me, and thou hast conquered. But I, on the contrary, have become a mockery—I am scoffed by every one.'*

"Now, Lord, that thou knowest I am at the mercy of this deep sea—thy will be done. But I pray God for this one boon, that the thought of death may always with me be associated with a firm hope and a constant thinking of the Lord. If thou givest me the living knowledge of the glory prepared for thy elect, I will fear no danger on the waves of this world, but in the midst of all the troubles that beset me, I will be firm and joyful. Now, Lord, I am contented with the path thou hast persuaded me to go, for it is full of sweetness and holiness. I thank thee that thou hast thought me worthy to make me an arrow in thy quiver, and to make me in sufferings and troubles like unto thee."

On the Tuesday following Easter Sunday, 1495, preaching on the book of Amos, Savonarola, in that mysterious manner in which he was wont to allude to approaching events of grave importance to him, or to his cause, foreshown or foreseen, plainly gave his congregation to understand—a struggle was impending with the court of Rome, in which his cause would be victorious.

"Have I not told you that I had come to combat and to conquer? Till now, the victory has been always ours, and so will it be hereafter. Our enemies invent a thousand fables, and one has even written of me that I had fled, carrying away with me much money. But I am here still. I hold my position fearlessly, like a good soldier. For at every sacrifice I desire to conquer, even at the sacrifice of my life for you."

From the month of July to the latter part of October, 1496, Fra Girolamo had abstained from preaching in Florence.

Again, however, at the instance of the authorities, and at the solicitation of vast numbers of respectable citizens, who represented to him the relapsed state of a great number of the converts that had been made by his previous labours, and the disorders that began to prevail in the city, he resumed his mission.

* Jer. xx 7.

His preaching against the scandals given to religion by the conduct of the highest dignitaries of the Church and of the Court of Rome, became now more vehement than ever.

Another citation was addressed to him, about the middle of October, 1496, repeating the former complaints against his new style of preaching, denouncing vices, predicting future evils, and maintaining that his knowledge came by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. "He should have considered that such doctrines were adapted to a very different state of temporal circumstances, and that they led to dissensions even in places where perfect peace reigned. Consequently, he was invited to Rome, for mature consideration of many points on which he had to justify himself, the onus of which justification lay upon him. His Holiness had learned with joy, from his letters, that, as became a good Christian, he submitted himself in all things to the usages of the Roman Church. In order, therefore, that so serious a matter might be properly dealt with, His Holiness had determined once more to address him, and command him, on the penalty of holy obedience, to abstain henceforth, publicly and privately, from all preaching, till he could seriously, conveniently, and becomingly appear in Rome; on doing which, the contents of the accompanying Brief, with all its clauses, should be again withdrawn."

The Brief was addressed to the prior, and all the brethren of the Convent of San Marco, and the tone of it was altogether different from that of the communication to Fra Girolamo. It charged him with blasphemy, rebellious language, craftiness, and destructive doctrines.

"His Holiness has understood, that a certain Hieronymus Savonarola, lately of Ferrara, had found pleasure in destructive doctrines, and, from the altered circumstances of Italy, had wandered so far, that he, without all ecclesiastical confirmation, and against all canonical ordinances, publicly gave forth that he was sent from God, and had communication with Him—yea, had published the blasphemous declaration, that Christ and God themselves erred, if he spake untruth. By long indulgence the

Pope had hoped he would have been induced to repent, and would have retracted his rebellious words, even would have shown himself humbled and dependent, for that through craftiness he had compassed the separation of his cloister from the Lombard superiors. But all hope has been disappointed, since not only has he disobeyed the written summons to appear in Rome, but has daily given great offence, both by speech and writing. For which cause, henceforth the general vicar of the Lombard congregation of his Order was authorized to inquire into and decide the matter. But Savonarola was meanwhile to withdraw himself from preaching. Moreover, the remaining brethren of the cloister of San Marco, at Florence, were admonished to incorporate themselves again with the Lombard congregation. The fathers Domenico da Pescia, Thomas Bussino, and Silvester of Florence, on the other hand, should leave the cloister, and betake themselves to Bologna, on pain of the guilt of disobedience, and the penalty of excommunication."

The difference in the tone and style of the two communications, was intelligible enough to any one knowing the duplicity and faithlessness that characterized every act of Alexander.

The misfortune of Savonarola was, that he had to do, with a superior in whom he could put no trust.

So great was the perfidy of this man, that he was utterly insensible to the shame of being distrusted by every one he had to do with. The record of his acts, daily written down by a witness of them, by one having an official cognizance of them, will show that no obligations of religion, honour, or humanity, were considered binding on him; that human life was not inviolable in his sight, when a man was in his power who was obnoxious to him or his son.

When Savonarola broke his long silence, and ascended the pulpit in the Lent of 1496, he took for his text the words—"*Etenim opportet obedire Deo magis quam hominibus.*" He thus alluded to the prohibition to preach, and his determination in regard to it: "On all occasions, when it can be obviously seen that the commands of superiors are contrary to the commandments of God, and especially to the precepts of charity, none

should obey in such a case, because it is written, 'We must rather obey God than man.' It happens, however, that, when it is not evident, but doubtful, that the commands of superiors are contrary to the divine commandments, I believe, in this case, we ought to follow the opinions of superiors. We all, then, have the commandments of God enjoining brotherly love, that every one should care for the salvation of his brother's soul," &c.

About the same time, he preached a very remarkable sermon, denouncing the disorders that existed among all classes, even the highest in the state and in the church, and the discourse was taken down, by some person present, with great exactness, and transmitted to the Pope Alexander the Sixth. His Holiness sent for a certain prelate of the Dominican order, a man of great learning; put the sermon in his hands, and told him to answer the complaints that were set forth in it, and to refute his assertions.

The prelate replied: "Holy father, I will do it; but I am in need of the arms that are necessary to answer this friar, and to overcome his arguments."

The pope asked, "What arms did he require?" The bishop answered: "This friar says it is forbidden to be licentious, and to commit the crime of simony. And he speaks the truth. What can I say to this?" "But," rejoined the pope, "what has he to do with these things?" The bishop then said to his Holiness: "Bestow preferment on him, and make him your friend; honour him with a red hat, in order that he may leave off prophesying, and that people may then ridicule what he said before?" This counsel pleased the pope, and he conferred immediately with the head of the order (in Rome), and sent to Florence Master Lodovico da Ferrara, an excellent person, master of the sacred palace, with an order, that first he should dispute with Fra Girolamo, and then, if he could not vanquish him (in argument), to offer him, on the part of his Holiness, the cardinal's hat, provided he abstained from prophesying. And so it was done, for the said Father Lodovico came directly to Florence, and straight went to hear a sermon of Fra Girolamo. There it pleased God that he should be recognised by a Florentine

merchant, who had known him in Rome, in his spiritual capacity. The merchant immediately acquainted Fra Girolamo with the fact of having seen the master of the sacred palace of his Holiness at his sermon. On learning this, Fra Girolamo sent to invite Father Lodovico to his convent; there he received him with great benignity, and they entered into discussions which lasted three days.

The master of the sacred palace, finding he could not prevail in argument, said to him at length: "It has pleased his Holiness, having been informed of your virtue and wisdom, to desire to elevate you to the dignity of the office of a cardinal, provided you proceed no further with revelations of future events." To which Fra Girolamo replied: "The Lord save me from it! the Lord save me from it!—(*Dio me ne guardi! Dio me ne guardi!*)—That I should resign the legation and the embassy of my Lord! But come to-morrow to the sermon, and I shall answer in the face of all."*

We hear nothing of the reply, or the amazement of the master of the sacred palace at the refusal of such an offer. But we are told, the next day, that Fra Girolamo mounted the pulpit with some vehemence, that denoted his spirit was moved, and the exaltation of it was apparently due to some divine impulse. He made a brief summary of the evils he had denounced, of the judgments he had predicted in his previous sermons, and, when he had finished the rapid sketch, he pronounced those solemn words in allusion to the proffered dignity of cardinal: "*I wish no other red hat than that of the martyr's blood-stained crown.*" —"Io non voglio altro capello rosso che quello del martirio rubricato del proprio sangue."†

The master of the sacred palace returned to Rome, and related all that he had seen in San Marco, and heard in its pulpit, to the pontiff.

Very unintelligible, no doubt, was the conduct of this mysterious friar to his holiness. But a very dangerous monk, no doubt, was he in the estimation of Alexander the Sixth, and

* Burlamacchi, p. 551. † Ibid.

one whom it would be necessary to extinguish altogether, since he would not be distinguished by him.

Old Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," says, it was a true saying of Alexander the Sixth, "*that it was better to offend a mighty monarch than to give umbrage to a mendicant monk.*" Whether Alexander said this or not, it may be doubtful, but that he acted on the thought that this man's holiness of life and doctrine, and his heroic courage in denouncing treason against the Church of Christ, were to him a terrible reproach, there can be very little doubt.

Savonarola, at this juncture, was on the brink of a precipice, and the ground was slipping away from under his feet. It required no great effort of malice, or fortuitous impulse of any kind, to cast him down.

The following is a remarkable passage in the Brief of the pope, again prohibiting the preaching of the father, and, *de novo*, calling on him to present himself before his Holiness:—

"But, as we now learn from the mouth of some of our brothers, the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and by your letters, that you are willing to submit yourself and all your writings to the judgment of the Holy Roman Church, which it is the duty of all good Christians, and of all in religion, to do, we have had great consolation, and we have wished to persuade ourselves that all that you have set forth up to this time in your preachings has not been suggested by a bad spirit, but rather has been in simplicity and zeal, to profit the vineyard of the Lord, though experience has demonstrated the contrary; but that we may not be negligent in that which in no way ought to be neglected, we have desired to write to you anew, and replying to your letters—(these letters, anterior to the reply of Savonarola to the Brief, no longer exist)—we command you, in virtue of holy obedience, that henceforward you abstain from preaching, either in public or in private, in order that they may not allege that you can, while ceasing to preach in public, hold secret assemblies: and you will attend to that until you can present yourself before us, without needing to be escorted,

as we hear that it is necessary to do, for the safety of your person. We would see you very willingly, and embrace you tenderly, until we can at leisure and with maturity decide upon your way of living for the future, or, if we may judge it right, until they have substituted in your place a man of probity and capacity. If you do this, as we expect you will, we revoke all former briefs, and all that they contain, in order that, with all security, you may give yourself up to the duties of your conscience. Given at Rome, St. Peter's, the 16th October, 1496."*

Various conspiracies, concocted in Milan in the latter part of 1496, having for their object the assassination of the Father, we are told by Burlamacchi, were attempted to be carried into effect in Florence, and were defeated only by the vigilance of the government. At length, it was found necessary to station a guard at the Convent of San Marco, for the protection of the Prior. Things came to such a pass, that the Father never left the Convent at this period except to go to the Duomo to preach, and then always attended with his own community in procession, and a large company of armed citizens for his protection. An attempt was, however, made in the Convent itself to take away his life by poison.

On the 18th of May, 1496, after he had suspended preaching for some time, he ascended the pulpit:—"Behold the motives (said he) which have induced me to reappear in this place. It would be easy for me to prove the invalidity of all the arguments which have been brought against me. But to the argument I adduce for my appearance here, there is no answer. I act, in coming here, in obedience to authority. To whom? To the Signoria!—you wish not to believe me, because, as you say, I am not obliged to obey them. Pardon me, I pray you; you have come here by the persuasion of people, and yet you imagine I should never allow myself to be persuaded by any one. It is then, you say, to obey your prelates, your superiors! But nothing of the kind has been directed me by my superiors. Know, then, that I have ascended the pulpit to obey

* Hist. Carle de Savonarola, p. 268.

Him who is the prelate of all prelates—the Supreme Pontiff of all popes—and who makes known to me what is contrary to His will, and in nature opposed to it. It would be much more willingly that I would repose, but I cannot do otherwise than I do, because I must obey; and it is not as formerly, when I derived honour and glory from so doing, for now, things and times are turning to tribulation..... Know, then, that these commandments are grave, because he who obeys them not, must bear the penalty; and still, my obedience is not a light matter, since, as you see, it brings hatred on me, reproaches, mortal perils, and invectives which come on me from all quarters. .....And to retract my former words? Believe it not. I am indeed come here to repeat those words to you,—'That he who confides in his own strength, and not in God, is a proud man, and the pride of man is a great weakness."'

In the midst of the tempest of opposition that is now setting in from all quarters against him, he tells his congregation of his troubles and his trust:—

"But I turn to God," he says, "and I say to Him: 'Thou hast put me in opposition with all people. If I reveal future events, every one accounts me a fool. If I speak of other things, every one contradicts me. But the more are the contradictions I meet with, the more I submit myself to the will of God in my regard.'.....A few words more, and I am done: O Florence! be of good courage in the time of tribulation. That is the first thing I have to say to you. Have confidence, have sure confidence then in your God, and believe that He is the only one who can enable you to surmount your tribulations."

The last prohibition to preach, and also to officiate clerically in any manner, came from Rome, at the close of October, 1496.*

"The 12th of May, 1497," says Burlamacchi, "the Pope directed a brief to the Franciscan Friars of San Salvatore, in Florence, commanding them, on pain of excommunication, at the ensuing festival publicly to pronounce and to declare excommunicated Fra Girolamo, for having refused obedience to

* De Rians, Sommario, p. 30.

the monitions and Apostolic commandments. The excommunication was to extend to all who abetted him, spoke with him, or attended his sermons."*

While the menaced excommunication was daily expected in Florence, Savonarola referred to that expectation, and the probability of its realization, in the pulpit:

"They write to Rome, the friar says he does not fear excommunication; I speak of that which they desire. Do not believe that any excommunication has been yet fulminated against me. *But they press for it*, so that it may happen they will ultimately prevail. 'Ipsi maledicent me et tu me benedices.' Lord, your benediction will suffice for me. *O, Italy, is it possible that you do not blush to make so great a war on a poor friar!*"

We learn from the editor of the *Lettere Inedite*, that in the month of May, 1497, notice of a forthcoming brief of excommunication had been received in Florence, and that it was on the 22nd of June following, the excommunication was published in Florence.

In the interval between the notice and the publication, Fra Girolamo, we are told by Padre Marchese, on the 22nd of May, 1497, wrote a letter to Alexander, which is the first of his to the Pontiff in the collection of "Lettere Inedite," and which the editor styles *Carta dolentissima.*

Nardi says the sentence of excommunication specified three crimes of Fra Girolamo.

The first, that being cited to Rome, he had disobeyed the order.

The second, that he preached heretical and perverse doctrines.

The third, that he had refused to accede to the union of his convents with the others of Tuscany.†

Alexander selected the enemies of Fra Girolamo to promulgate the excommunication: he sent the brief to the Franciscans, from which the following extract is taken:

"Since the pope had often heard by clerical men of spiritual

* Burlamacchi, tom. v. p. 535.

† Storée Fiorentine, lib. ii.

and worldly standing, that Savonarola was spreading destructive doctrines, he had hoped in the beginning that he would turn back from his error. Moreover, that he had not appeared when summoned, to justify himself from the accusations made against him; and had also not refrained from preaching, as he had been ordered. All this had been borne with great leniency, out of regard to the excuse alleged, and in the constant hope that he would return to obedience. But when he continued in his perverseness, the reincorporation of the cloisters of San Marco with the Lombard congregation was demanded, which likewise he would not obey. In order, therefore, to perform what was owing to the welfare of the souls committed to him, according to his duty as a shepherd, he commanded him, under threatening of the like punishment, to announce openly in all churches the excommunication of Savonarola, and to attend to the strict observance of the same, and to give to the papal commissary thereto commissioned all required support."

The 16th October, 1497, Alexander wrote to Savonarola complaining of his continued agitation, but declaring at the same time that he was prepared to suspend the censures provided Fra Girolamo abstained from preaching, and came to Rome to answer for his conduct.

The second letter of Savonarola to the Pope in the collection of *Lettere Inedite*, is dated the 29th of October, 1497. In this letter he complains bitterly of a papal brief to the prior of San Marco, dated the 16th of October, 1497, annulling the reform introduced by him in the Dominican congregation of Tuscany, and reducing the San Marco and the other houses to the authority of the provincial of Lombardy.

The Signoria caused two communications to be made to the Pontiff by their diplomatic agents in Rome, in reference to the menaced interdict and excommunication of Fra Girolamo; one of these is dated the 22nd May, 1497, the other the 8th July, the same year.

Mansi, the erudite continuator and editor of the "Miscellanea of Balluzius," by whom the biography of Savonarola was

introduced into that work, appends to the performance a collection of letters of Savonarola, two of which are addressed to Sovereigns, urging on them the assembling of a general council. These last-mentioned letters, he says, were intercepted by the Duke of Milan—"*Mei servatus codex in Bibliothecæ Collegii.*" (Lucensis.)

In one of them, addressed to the Emperor of Germany, the writer states that "he had written, by God's command, on the same subject to the kings of France, Spain, England, and Hungary, in order that they might combine together and provide for the common safety. ....

"Under heaven," he adds, "there cannot be a greater sin than to pervert the true worship of God, and to turn it to the dishonour of the Divine Majesty: which crying sin to leave unpunished, and affect not to see it, and what was urgently required (for a remedy), was no other than to give sin a sanction, and a support to the enormous vices of men. For at present, in the Church of God, we see a state of things in which, from head to foot, there is no soundness, but an abominable aggravation of all vices, you standing by quietly, and even bowing down to the great iniquity which usurps the seat of Peter, and which, without shame, runs into all disorders; and it is now long the Church is without a true pastor. I testify, *in verbo domini*, this Alexander the Sixth is not a Pontiff, and cannot be recognised as such. For, putting apart his wicked crime of simony, by means of which he bought the Papal throne, and every day makes larger sale of ecclesiastical benefices, and by other manifest vices, I affirm, amongst other things, that he is not a Christian, and does not believe in the existence of God, which surpasses every species of infidelity. And before all the world, in opportune time and place, I will discover his other occult vices, as my God has commanded me to do."

And, finally, in the most solemn manner, and in terms of earnestness and zeal for the honour of religion that it is difficult to believe, nay, almost impossible to imagine, feigned, he calls on the Emperor "to have at heart the desire and the design to purify

the Church, and to liberate it from such astounding and contaminating pollution." *

The other letter, on the same subject, is addressed to the Queen of Spain, pretty much in the same terms, but still more strongly, if possible, pointing out the appalling fact, "that, instead of religion, sanctity, and clemency reigning in the Church, pride, avarice, luxury, and every species of perversity had then got possession of its rule." †

Previously to the time when Lodovico Sforza sent to his brother, Cardinal Ascanio, in Rome, the intercepted letter of Fra Girolamo, addressed to the King of France, urging on that sovereign to call a general council for remedying the calamities of the Church occasioned by the scandalous life of Alexander the Sixth, and the simony by means of which he had intruded himself into the See of Rome, the Pope had no particular animosity towards Savonarola. He had simply lent himself, readily and naturally, to the enemies of a Friar who was a holy and a virtuous man, who reproved impiety and vice with freedom and effect. But things took a new turn when that Cardinal, Ascanio, the same prelate-prince who had the chief hand in arranging the terms of the sale of the church and the purchase of the tiara, between the sellers in the Conclave and the purchaser, Roderigo Borgia, who was the candidate for the vacant Apostolic See, in 1492, presented that letter to his protege, then seated in the Chair of Peter, in 1497.

Lodovico Sforza, duke of Milan, had married his sister to Giovanni de Pietro Francesco de Medici, the pretender to the rights and privileges of the banished Pietro de Medici, in the hope of establishing his own power in Tuscany.

The secret adherents of this pretender and the agents of the Duke of Milan, in Florence, had even conspired to assassinate the Father.‡

Lodovico, who took every opportunity of inflicting injury on Fra Girolamo, had at length the means afforded him, by one of his agents, of doing a signal mischief to the Fra Girolamo. This

* Burlamacchi, p. 504. † Ibid. Appendix, p. 584. ‡ Ibid. p. 551

agent had intercepted a letter of Fra Girolamo, one of several communications which he had addressed to the different sovereigns of Christendom, setting forth the terrible evils and calamities with which the church was afflicted, and stating that, being virtually without a chief or head worthy of being its ruler, or being even called a Christian, a council should be called, and all Christian princes should assist in the convocation of it.

Alexander's pontificate commenced in August, 1492. Savonarola, in a sermon on Amos, the Tuesday after Easter Sunday, 1497, preached to an immense multitude, and reminded his congregation of words he had addressed to them long previously: "You should remember that I told you, five years ago, that we should have to fight against a double power, against a double wisdom, and a double malice: and my brethren are witnesses, as well as my auditory of that time, that I announced it often. Those words are now verified. Write to Rome that it is five years since this monk announced publicly that a time would come when he would have to fight against a double power, that is to say, against secular princes, and prelates, who are ecclesiastical princes: and against a double wisdom —against the wisdom of theologians, and the craftiness of worldly men; and also against a double malice, that is to say, against lukewarm people—*tepidi*—who are open adversaries, and like- [illegible] against some of them who are secret enemies, and that the words which you heard, long before that war commenced, are now accomplished.... You should then believe that other things announced by us will in due time be likewise accomplished.... For thus I confirmed your faith, when I predicted to you that this war should be a cruel one, that it should be waged with the weapons of excommunications, by force of arms, and by all possible means of opposition."

Sforza being a most bitter enemy of the father, on account of his having predicted that the duke's fortunes would decline, and that he would die in a prison (which eventually happened as it had been foretold), no sooner was apprised of this letter being intercepted, and had gained possession of it, than he sent it to Rome to his brother, Cardinal Ascanio, to be delivered to the

pope. This act was the immediate cause of the death of Savonarola.

The cardinal, handing Alexander the letter, said: "We put the tiara on your head, in order that you might defend the church, but dangerous times are coming, and with mischiefs in their train, which you will not be able to oppose, and you will lose the tiara, and we our hats."* The pope, having read the letter, became enraged and exasperated against the audacious friar of San Marco. "A deadly hatred of him," we are told by Burlamacchi, "was generated in the mind of the Pontiff, which nothing could appease or quiet to the last hour of the life of Savonarola."†

Pietro Delfino, Bishop of Padua, in a letter of his, dated 11th April, 1498, says: "The frauds of that friar of Ferrara (Savonarola) are at length discovered. Excommunicated *this year* by the Pope (this is a mistake), and prohibited by the general of his order from preaching, from celebrating, *or speaking of the Pope even*, it appeared that he no longer had any fear either of God or man."‡ The general, we are told, was a most mild man. The vices of Alexander, in his opinion, should have been mildly dealt with, or not touched on at all. How would St. Bernard have fared were he living at the close of the fifteenth century in Florence, and a member of the Dominican order, subject to this mild general?

Alexander the Sixth having fulminated his excommunication against Savonarola, the same was speedily published in Florence in all due form. Nearly all the clergy secular and regular in the city (with the exception of the members of the Dominican Order of San Marco), many with lighted torches in their hands, were congregated in the Church of the Duomo, the scene of so many former triumphs of sacred eloquence, of sanctity, and of sound doctrine, when Savonarola proclaimed the truths of the

* Monsieur Carle, in his biography of Savonarola, says the words used by the cardinal were the following:—"We had much trouble to put the tiara on your head—if you do not take care, this monk will take it from you."

† Burlamacchi, p. 551. ‡ Bal. Miscell. tom. iv. p. 552.

gospel and expounded the Holy Scriptures, and the writings of the fathers from that pulpit, to hear that famous preacher reprobated, condemned, and anathematized as a rebel and a traitor to the authority of that church of which Alexander Borgia, for its great calamity, was then the Pontiff.

The excommunication being read and published with all proper solemnity with sound of bell, and duly recorded sentence of spiritual death and suspension from all clerical functions, the four great torches, borne by certain dignitaries of the church, were quenched, and Savonarola remained a silenced anathematized friar, scorned by his brethren of other orders, scowled on by the secular clergy, and, in the sight of the Borgias, a son of perdition, a sower of sedition, and a heretic.

The father bore the ignominy of the late ceremonial in the Duomo with becoming meekness and resignation. He was advised to solicit the Pope to remove the excommunication, and acknowledge the errors imputed to him—but this he refused to do. In a public sermon, wherein he referred to the excommunication, he had declared, with more energy of language perhaps than became the preacher, or was well suited for the place where it was uttered, that he would never crave Alexander for its removal, or retract the doctrines he had taught.

At this period, Burlamacchi states (but on what authority he does not mention) that the Cardinal of Sienna, subsequently Pope Pius the Third, wrote a letter from Rome to the father, making a tender of his good offices with the Pope on certain conditions, more or less important, for the removal of the excommunication, and undertaking to have that object effected "l'assolutione impetrata dal Papa—si fussero pagati 5000 scudi a suo creditore en Firenza."*

Savonarola declined the services of the cardinal and the purchase of them. He had preached the truth, he said, in reply to his eminence, and he would stand by it, though the earth should open beneath his feet and the sky should fall on his devoted head.

He addressed a long letter of remonstrance to the Pope, which will be found elsewhere.

* Burlamacchi, p. 553.

The last letter of Savonarola to Alexander, given by Burlamacchi, and also referred to in the "Lettere Inedite," is dated the 13th March, 1498.

This final communication was likewise a remonstrance against the anathema and a solemn warning to the Pontiff. It was in the following terms.

"Most holy father,—It being the office of a Christian, and for the honour of God and the faith of the Lord, to defend rectitude of life and principles .... (Original imperfect) seeing by the bad example of many pastors, the flock of Christ exposed to the danger of being led away from the truth of the gospel, I have preached the faith, revealing future judgments, as it were inspired by God, on account of which things I suffer many persecutions from impious men. At least, from your holiness, I did not expect so much persecution, but rather deserved support and encouragement; but you have done the contrary by me. Notwithstanding having read and heard so manifestly and openly my explanations and the truth of my predications, you, holy father, have lent and opened your ears to all the impious and the enemies of the holy cross, who do not cease to battle with me; drawing away from me all aid which, as a Christian, not only you ought to lend me, but by your office which it was obligatory on you to extend to me, and giving to wolves in sheep's clothing faculties and privileges freely. But the Lord makes his election of the weak things of this world to confound the strong lions of perverse men, and is prepared to hear me in defence of this truth for which I have suffered so much. And all those who have impeded the work of God will repent of having done so, because, in these things, we do not seek our own glory, nor that of men, but only that of God, and now with the strongest desire we wait for death. And thou, most holy father, do not defer providing for the health of your own soul. Vale. The unprofitable servant of Jesus Christ, Girolamo Savonarola of Ferrara—Manu propria."*

Savonarola was not sent in this world to expend his energies in vain repinings and unavailing complaints, or to eat and

* Burlamacchi, p. 551, tom. i. ap Miscell. Baluzii.

drink and to sleep away his life in quiet and tranquillity. Again he pours forth his exhortations, denunciations and defence of his doctrines in the pulpit: "Lord, my God, they say that I am a seducer, and that I deceive the people; you know that I have not committed this crime, but that it was you who caused me to come to Florence, by saying to me: *Exite de terra tua et de cognatione tua et de domo patris tui, et veni in terram quam monstravero tibi;* and it was by your inspiration, and not of my own will, that I came to Florence; and I am content that the glorious Virgin Mary deigns to be a witness of all that I say, as also the blessed spirits, all the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs, the confessors, the virgins; that they are witnesses to my soul if I do not speak the truth, and if I have foretold the scourges of Italy, the renovation of the church and the promises made to the city of Florence; and if I have announced all those things by my own inspiration or from your illumination, and by your command; and if I have preached in the new government of Florence of my own good or bad will, or in order to obey you. . . . . To-day I protest that whosoever contradicts these things, contradicts you and not me; persecutes you and not me, and seeks his own ruin, for which I am in no way answerable, since I have so often warned them; and for all that, I ask no o her recompense but Thee alone, but I beseech you that you will assist in your own work, and that you will defend the innocent. I seek not for vengeance, I do not desire it; but you see, Lord, what a multitude of devils have broken loose from hell, and by their efforts excite the wicked to extinguish your light. . . . . I have said to you, that we had to combat here with double power, with increased malice and double craftiness, and they do not only fight with words, but by their actions; it is not a war with the air, but it will be made with the sword, excommunications and torments; it will be a persecution which will make martyrs, and God wills that I should be the first. . . . . Write this every where, that the brother whom they call a heretic says that here there will not be peace. . . . . But write still more, and say that it is not the brother who thinks that, but God, and that Rome in particular will be overwhelmed

with so many plagues, that woe be unto those who will be there... And afterwards God will renew his church. Write again, that Florence will receive the accomplishment of all the promises that have been made to her, and that Pisa will be taken under the Florentine dominion, but not immediately, on account of your ambition and your discords. Brother, thou sayest that thou oughtest not to preach this morning, and why? Because thou mayest be an occasion of scandal; and I reply that my manner of preaching has never been an occasion of scandal, and I trust in Christ Jesus that it will never be so. Believe then that if I thought it would be better for me not to preach, I would not preach; but I know well that it would be worse if there was no preaching here this morning, and I am therefore obliged to act thus."*

He now begins to justify disobedience to the supreme spiritual authority, on the ground of the invalidity of the authority, and the unlawfulness of the commands issued by that invalid authority.

"Brother, thou weakenest the ecclesiastical discipline. I answer you that it is not true, and that I will remain subject to the ecclesiastical power, and I submit myself, I, and all that I have, to the correction of the Roman Catholic Church, and to the ecclesiastical power. Here I defend the ecclesiastical power, the Roman Catholic Church and the doctrine of Jesus Christ; but thou shouldst know that the ecclesiastical power and the Roman Catholic Church would have those who govern to live well, to defend the good, and not to lend its help to the wicked or favour them; I also extol its greatness, I exalt it: yes, I would have ecclesiastical power maintained; but I would have you to understand it well. O brethren! the Pope can do all things; but how do you understand these words that the Pope can do all things? He cannot, however, abolish baptism, nor even confession: and even though he should say to any one who might desire it, 'I will not allow you to get yourself baptized,' that person would not be bound to obey him. The Pope then cannot do all things, but only what is in accordance with the law, and those things which are good and just." †

* Sermon Savon. Hist. Carle., p. 277. † Ibid. p. 290.

He tells his congregation, on another day, he has examined himself carefully, to see if he was labouring under delusion or error. "But, I said, perhaps thou hast erred in the matter of faith; yet on this side also I found my path holy, pure, and blameless, since I have always believed, and do believe all things that the holy Roman Church believes,—have always submitted myself to her, and do even now submit myself to her. Moreover, I thought whether I had erred in something that I had prophesied; but in this also I found no error, because I had foretold, in word and writing, only what was given to me by Him who erreth not. Therefore I go further to ascertain whether my desires be free from vanity, pride, and covetousness, or whether I preached any thing from such motives; and, through the grace of the Lord, I have found that I have preached for his honour and the welfare of souls."

On the 18th February, 1498, about three months before his death, he again referred to the subject of the excommunication. He had been advised to solicit the Pope for absolution, but he had not done so *yet*. "In other matters, I know I have fallen into error, being a frail, sinful mortal. But not in this. For I have preached the gospel and its truth, and in proof of my fidelity to it, my life has been in accordance with the Holy Scripture and with reason. The result of that preaching has been to bring good order and morality into the city, and to prove that my object was to promote the interests of its people, temporal and eternal. The authority which would prevent me preaching, hinders me from doing good, and aids (others) to do evil. And for this reason I hold, the excommunication is not to be regarded." . . . "It is absurd to say the Pope cannot err. There have been several bad Popes who have fallen into error. If it were true that the Pontiffs could not commit any error, we should have to do in all things like unto them to be saved. But then people say the Popes can err as men, but not as Popes; but I say the Pope can err even in decision and judgment made by him. Many decisions of past Popes have been contradicted by their successors. But if the Pope, as such, errs, he is not

Pontiff, but mere man, who can be deceived and led into error. A Christian, as such, cannot sin. But if I sin, I do not so, as a Christian, but as a man. In fact, the Pope can err in two ways, either from error of judgment or wickedness of heart. But it is for God to judge this matter, and for us to presume that his holiness has been misled and deceived. So in this affair of mine I will prove that the Pope has been deceived by false information."

John Francis Picus Mirandola wrote a small work against the sentence of excommunication of Alexander the Sixth, on Savonarola, and in defence of his innocence, which treatise must not be confounded with his life of Savonarola. This treatise is entitled, "Opusculum de Sententiæ excommunicationis injusta, J. F. P. Mirandulæ, pro Hieronymo Savonarolæ viri prophetæ innocentia. In quarto, Parvo Wurttembergæ, 1521 (43 pages)."* It is dedicated to the illustrious Hercules d'Este.

Mirandola sets out with declaring that the infallibility of the Pope extends only to the decisions of the Pontiff in his council, formally declared in fundamental matters of faith. He cites Pope Innocent the Third for the opinion, that while "the justice of God is grounded on truth, which does not deceive nor can be deceived, the judgment of the Church founds itself on human opinion, which often deceives and is deceived. He presses not only Popes into the service of his opinions, but some of the most renowned theologians. He thus makes Gerson defend his doctrine of invalidity of an unjust excommunication, from his treatise "*De Excommunicationibus* et irregularitatibus." "In many cases," says he, "it is no contempt of a decree, if one even disobeys the commands of the Pope, presuming that he is using his power in a shameful and scandalous manner, for destruction, and not for edification, seeing that the Apostle says, that power is given to us to repair, and not to destroy. Who doubts that one must withstand the Pope in all such cases as come under observation, and say to him, What doest thou? Also, it is nowise to show contempt for the decree, to challenge worldly help against an unjust excommuni-

* In Biblio. Trin. Coll. Dub.

cation, for that is not right, but force; and, according to the natural law, we repel force with force, that is a right every man possesses. In general, opposition against every undue demand of the kind is only to be praised, if one carefully avoid every scandal which can be given to the less informed, but these are sufficiently informed, and yet scandalize themselves; hence are they to be looked on as Pharisees, and not as children of God. Albeit, we must, in behalf of the accused, do every thing in order, if he is wickedly advised, to open the eyes of the Pope; but if mildness and humility have availed nothing, then we must take on manly and valiant ingenuousness. In these cases, patience is an ass's patience, and fear, a hare's fear."

In the defence of Savonarola by Paulinus Barnardinus, against the alleged unjust excommunication fulminated by Alexander the Sixth, inserted in the Appendix of the 1st vol. of Baluzius' Miscellanea, page 593, it is maintained, that Fra Girolamo could not be deemed heretical, because no one doctrine of his had ever been formally examined or validly condemned. He could not be accounted schismatical, because he never denied the supreme authority of the Pope, or refused to recognize his office of supreme ruler of the Universal Church.

Because, in his latest discourse, he declared his recognition of the supremacy of the Pontiffs, but asserted the excommunication was extorted by the evil courses of his malignant enemies. He could not, therefore, be accounted a schismatic, but, at the most, as pertinacious or insubordinate.

Because, the sentence of excommunication set forth things that were manifestly erroneous and mendacious.

Because, it was obtained by purchase on false statements by wicked people.

Because, it was false to assert, that to preach reformation of morals and renovation of religion, and to say that the latter was required, or to predict scourges for a sinful people, or a disordered state and scandalized Church, was an act worthy of excommunication.

Because, theologians, and especially Thomas of Aquinas, held,

that on account of danger to the faith, or peril to morals, delinquent or erring prelates might be publicly reproved and corrected, as Peter had been reproved by Paul.

Because, if the question be asked, if Savonarola ceased to preach, would the faith have been endangered, and would morals have suffered?

It must be answered, that by his preaching, the faith had been marvellously strengthened in Florence, and had been no less signally improved. And by its cessation for eight months after the Pope's prohibition to preach, it was the opinion of the magistrates of Florence, that religion and morals had grievously suffered.

Because, the prohibition was obtained from the Pope, not on account of any heresy or error of doctrine, but by godless people, enemies of truth, and of the friar who preached it, by bad means for a bad end.

Finally, because it was decreed in the Council of Nice, that no excommunication should take place without the sanction of a synod.

And, because contumacy is accounted a just cause of excommunication, but he is not contumacious who offers to defend an impugned dogma or doctrine, and asks to be heard, and is not afforded an opportunity of justifying himself.

Now it must be observed, in reference to the last paragraph, that it is not true that no such opportunity had been given to Fra Girolamo.

He received two citations, calling on him to present himself in Rome, to answer the complaints made against his new mode of preaching.

He pleaded illness on the occasion of the first one. He gave no direct answer to the second, but only a vague assurance of respect for the Holy See. In all probability, he had the fate of John Huss very strongly impressed on his imagination at this period. The arguments of Pico and Paulinus may suffice for Protestants, to enable them with facility to come to a satisfactory conclusion as to the course taken by Savonarola, inasmuch as their judgment in this matter is free from many embarrassing

considerations which Catholics, in dealing with it, have to take into account.

But these arguments will not satisfy Catholics in general, that Savonarola was justified in resisting the papal authority, because the measures complained of were severe, extorted, or apparently unjust, and grounded on erroneous information. These arguments were set up in the case of the Jansenists by their supporters, and they were unsuccessfully urged.

But Savonarola did not rest his defence wholly or mainly on such arguments. He had recourse to them, it is true, in several of his writings, as minor objections to the validity both of the prohibition to preach, and the excommunication for preaching. But Savonarola's main argument in defence of his resistance of the authority of Alexander the Sixth was, that the true Pope was not manifest—the true successor of St. Peter was not evident, or existent in one, who had attained the tiara by simony, and whose whole life was contrary to religion and a scandal to his high office.

In Savonarola's letters to the sovereigns of Spain and Germany, urging on them the necessity of calling a general council, he explicitly declares, that he was prepared to show, "con ragioni certissimi e con segni sopra naturali," that the Church was without a chief ruler, and without a pastor in those times, "since Alexander the Sixth was not a Pontiff, nor even a Christian."

It was for these letters in reality, though not ostensibly so, that Savonarola was consigned to death.

Again, in his last letter to Pope Alexander the Sixth, dated 13th March, 1498, he expresses nearly the same sentiments.

It is very easy to say Savonarola should have obeyed the citation. But if Savonarola had good reason to fear for his life in the event of obeying it—if he had a thorough conviction on his mind that no guarantees of Alexander for his security, no *safe conduct* of his afforded the slightest hope of safety for his life or liberty—was he bound to peril his existence, or called on to do more than to submit whatever doctrines of his might have

been called in question, to the legitimate authority of his church, and to undertake to make any requisite written explanation of his tenets or his acts, but at a convenient distance from Cæsar Borgia and his father Alexander?

But although Savonarola considered Alexander's simony and other crimes had virtually deprived the Church of its speaking organ and supreme spiritual head, he was well aware, that it was only by the convocation of a council that a true Pontiff could be elected, and the unworthy one deposed and removed.

He never set up any rival, or favoured the pretensions of any antipope. He never denied the supremacy of the Holy See. In his letter to the Pope of the 13th March, 1498, we find at the end the words

"Sanctam Ecclesiam veneror."

So far from setting himself in opposition to the Pope's authority, when he was prohibited from preaching, he abstained for eight months at one period from ascending the pulpit. It was only when the reign of debauchery recommenced, and that to his silence the new disorders of a people who had been reclaimed from vice to a wonderful extent, were ascribed, *tornarono in pocchi giorni tutte le lascivie mali costumi*, as we are told by Nardi (p. 39), that he considered the interests of Christianity were suffering great injury, and the interests spiritual and temporal of the people of Florence were grievously hurt by this impediment to the exercise of the duties of a minister of the gospel, and that the impediment was raised by an authority illegitimately established.

Still it was an authority: but was it of that kind which St. Paul deems entitled to obedience?

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, says, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God.

"Therefore, he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation.

"For rulers are not a terror to the good, but to the evil doers.

Wilt thou then be not afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same.

"For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, fear, for he beareth not the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him who doeth evil.

"Wherefore, be subject of necessity, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."*

Elsewhere he says to the Hebrews :—

"Obey your prelates and be subject to them. For they watch us, being to render an account of your souls; that they may do this with joy and not with grief. For this is not expedient for you."†

St. Paul's idea of the qualities that a bishop should possess, is expressed in the following sentence—"For a bishop must be without crime, as the steward of God; not proud, not subject to anger, not given to wine, no striker, nor greedy of filthy lucre. But given to hospitality, gentle, sober, just, holy, continent. Embracing that faithful word, which is according to doctrine, that he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers."‡

St. Peter's sentiments on the same subject, differ only in terms from those of St. Paul—"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking care of it, not by constraint, but willingly according to God, and not for filthy lucre's sake, but voluntarily.

"Neither as lording it over the clergy, but being made a pattern of the flock from the heart."§

Whether my readers will approve or reprobate the opinions of eminent Catholic divines on this subject, my duty is to lay before them not only all the facts of the case, but the opinions of Catholic persons of high authority, on the subject of the power exercised by the Popes in regard to excommunication, and the right of questioning or resisting that power.

Melchior Cano, one of the most distinguished divines who

* Romans xiii. 3, 4, 5. † Hebrews xiii. 17.
‡ Titus i. 7. § 1 Peter v. 23.

assisted at the council of Trent, a chief light of the Spanish Church, explaining to the Catholic world the doctrine of the Catholic Church, enquires (lib. v. c. 5. de loc. Theol. Ed. Collon), "Will there not be then (some person may say) any mark whereby the decisions of councils on matters of faith can be known? There will clearly. The first, and that indeed a manifest one, is, if those who assert the contrary be adjudged heretics, of which we have examples. (cap. Damnamus de Summa Trinitate in 6to. and Clemen unic. de Summa Trinitate, sec. 2.) Another mark is, when the council, in its decrees, uses the following form: If any one will believe so or so, let him be anathema; of which form there are many examples in the first synod of Toledo, and in that of Trent. A third is, if a sentence of excommunication be passed, *ipso jure*, against those who contradict this decision; (an example of this is found, de Her. cap. cum Christo)..... A fourth mark is said to be expressly and distinctly believed by the faithful, or to be received by them as a dogma of the Catholic faith; or if by such, or similar words, any thing is said to be contrary to the Gospel, or to the doctrine of the apostles, if it be propounded, I say, *not as an opinion, but by a clear and fixed decree;* for although the opinion of Durandus be condemned (c. *gaudemus de divortiis*), yet he who, with reference to it, used the words, *But this appears senseless and hostile to the faith of Christ*, did not wish to brand upon it the mark of heresy; for the word 'appears' weakens the certainty of the sentence. Moreover, those things which, in the decrees of councils or popes, are introduced for the sake of explanation, or to answer objections, or which are noticed briefly, and only touched on, but which are not the chief subject on which the controversy principally turned, *these do not concern the faith;* that is, *they are not decrees of Catholic faith.*—As an illustration, let us lay down an example, which having occurred in one case may be applied to many others. What is said (in cap. Firmiter de summa Trinitate) of angels being incorporeal, is not a decree of faith; whereas since that decretal, many theologians, falsely indeed, but yet without incurring the mark of heresy, have as-

serted the contrary; and indeed, when the synod willed to explain the meaning of the Catholic tenet, 'I believe in God—creator of all things, visible and invisible,' it added, 'corporeal or incorporeal;' which words, it is plain, were introduced for the purpose *of explaining*, not *of defining*. And as the council supposed, what in reality was true, angels to be invisible; so, in like manner, they supposed them to be incorporeal. But this question apart, my object is, (and in treating of it I imagine I am doing a service to divines), *to show that not all things which are even absolutely and simply affirmed in councils, are decrees of faith;* of which matter, I could adduce, if it were necessary, many examples," &c.....

"Whatever is expressly," says Dr. Doyle, "*defined, declared*, and *proposed*, to all the faithful, with and by the consent of the pope, and bishops throughout the Church, whether assembled in council or otherwise, this to us is a decree or definition which we cannot reject or impugn."*

"The general councils have," observes the same author, "with scarcely an exception, been assembled for the adjudication of some disputes about doctrine, for the purification of the morals of the faithful, and for the reformation or improvement of discipline. They have had not only to define whether certain doctrines were or were not agreeable to the word of God, *which class of decisions alone constitutes articles of faith*, but they had a variety of other matters to dispose of."

The distinguished Roman Catholic prelate of Ireland I have just quoted, it will be seen, pushed the doctrine imputed to Savonarola farther than the Dominican ever did in any of his writings.

"A principal duty then," says Dr. Doyle, "of all the general and national councils, especially during the middle ages, was the enacting of laws, partly civil and partly ecclesiastical, for the regulation of the interests of both Church and State; some of these laws still continue, others have force only in particular Churches or States, whilst hundreds upon hundreds of them

* Rt. Rev. Dr. Doyle's Essay on Catholic Claims, p. 160. 1826.

have been abrogated or gone into disuse. This should be the case from the very nature of every human law (such as these canons were), and which is very properly defined by Gratien, as having the following conditions essentially annexed to it:—*Lex erit honesta, justa, possibilis, secundum naturam, secundum patriæ consuetudinem, loco temporique conveniens, necessaria, utilis, manifesta quoque—nullo privato commodo, sed pro civium utilitate conscripta* (c. 2. dist. 4).—When the laws of the Church have not these conditions, when they prescribe what is immoral, unjust, or impossible, they are void from the beginning. When they are not suited to the natural dispositions of a people, or to the just usages of a country, when they are not adapted to the times and places for which they are intended, when they are not necessary or useful, or if they be enacted for the advantage of individuals, and not of the community at large, they should not be received; and if admitted, they cease to have force when the conditions which sanctioned their introduction discontinue. They cease to bind when the final cause, or chief object for which they were enacted, is no more found to exist. They cease when they are repealed by a contrary usage, or when they go into disuse," &c.....*

One of the most modern works on canon law, of high authority in the Catholic world, is that of the learned Joannis Devoti, archbishop of Carthagena, "Institutionum Canonicarum," Libri IV.

I find the following statements made, and propositions laid down, in various parts of the text and notes of the 1st chapter, titulus xvii.

"There is one end of all ecclesiastical punishments, namely, of a curative kind; that the criminal should be reformed, and that others, by the example of his punishment, should be restrained within the bounds of duty."

"There is a double power possessed by the Church in awarding punishment—inflicting pains which the body suffers, and imposing censures which afflict the mind."†

* Rt. Rev. Dr. Doyle's Essay on Catholic Claims, p. 101.

† I. Devoti. Instit. Canon. tom. ii. pp. 375, *et seq.* 8vo. 3rd ed. *Gand*, 1836.

"In the beginning there was no distinction between ecclesiastical pains and censures; all the penalties of the Church were of a spiritual kind, which afflicted the mind only, and did not extend to the body.

"The kind of excommunication recommended to be practised by St. Paul, against those whose lives and morals were scandalous, who were licentious, avaricious, rapacious, drunken, serving idols, given to detraction, was to shut them out from communion with the faithful, neither to eat nor to drink with them, 1 ad. Corinth. v. 11. And again, to the Romans, the faithful were to hold no communion with those who made dissensions in the fold, or gave offence in matters of doctrine. And again to the Thessalonians, ii. and iii. v. 14, he writes: "If any one will not obey our words by letter, take note of him, and do not associate with him, that he may be confounded." And again, from the second epistle of John, v. 10, 11—"If any one come to you, and does bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor bid him welcome, for he who bids him welcome communicates with his wicked works."

"The different degrees of excommunication are now called major and minor. Exclusion for a time from the sacraments and from public worship, is the ordinary penalty of the latter. A misprision of the major excommunication is thus punished; as, for instance, communicating with a person so punished, or aiding or conniving at his crime.

"The major is that punishment of a grievous crime against religion or public morals, which casts the culprit out of the church society and Christian communion. This is properly the penalty of anathema, which St. Paul denounces to any who minister to the faithful without authority, Gal. i. v. 9. Si quis vobis evangelizaverit, præter id quod acceptis anathema sit.

"Teachers of false doctrine, heretics, schismatics, rebels to authority, spiritual or temporal, and traitors to their country, *proditores patriæ*, by the *Synodus Toletanus*, are punished with this anathema."

The power of a bishop to excommunicate is limited to the

diocess which is subject to him. But the Pope's authority, extending and being supreme over all sees throughout Christendom, his power to excommunicate has no limits as to locality." Devoti would infer, that power has hardly any limits at all, of any kind. We now come to an exposition of the canons as to limits and legitimacy of excommunications, which concern the subject of Savonarola's excommunication. Tit. xviii. sect. xiii. tom. 2, p. 408.

"All Christians ought to hold," says Devoti, "*that excommunications, even unjust, which nevertheless proceed from legitimate power, are binding; since it is for subjects to obey the laws, which for determined ends are enacted, nor is it lawful to call in question the justice of them.*"

But this statement of a decision that has high ecclesiastical authority for its support, leaves Savonarola's main objection to the excommunication by Alexander the Sixth, still to be dealt with and removed. Savonarola never contended seriously that it was lawful for him, as a Roman Catholic, to call in question any formal judgment of the Church, embodied in an excommunication even apparently unjust, *which emanated from legitimate authority*. But Savonarola denied that the authority from which the excommunication came was legitimate.

He not only knew that the Cardinals of Rome (one of whom was subsequently a Pontiff) were taking effective measures for getting a general council called for the deposition of Alexander the Sixth, but he was co-operating with them for that object with the principal sovereigns of Europe.

With the knowledge he must have obtained from certain cardinals in Rome, and others of the Sacred College, (in the interest of Savonarola,) who were favourable to the views of Charles the Eighth of France, with whom he was in correspondence and close concert, he could not be ignorant of the corrupt means by which Alexander had reached the papal throne. He declared, in several of his sermons and tracts, that Alexander had gained his sacred office by simony. All cotemporary history of any value proclaims the same fact. The universal voice of history, as if

with one organ of speech, cries out against his crimes and those of his nefarious son. Humanity, religion, nature, society itself, exclaim against the iniquities of the buyer and the seller of every thing sacred in his church, its highest dignities, its holiest sacraments, against the father of the Borgias, seated in the chair of Peter, surrounded by the living evidences of his licentiousness, insensible to shame, heedless of scandal, scorning even the hypocrisy of seeming to be cast down for a moment, at the aspect of the Church so grievously disordered, the chastity of the cloister slain, and the purity of the white stole so sadly sullied.

There was a facility in the case of John the Twenty-first, for getting rid of that Pontiff at the council of Constance, when his multitudinous crimes were arrayed against him.

He had entered into a compact at his election, binding himself to resign the office of Pontiff, if the good of the Church required it.

He had no son to cut the throats of the relatives of any cardinals who might be suspected of designing to call a general council.

He had suffered himself to be entrapped and caught in the meshes of the safe-conduct violating sovereign, Sigismund, far away from the castle of San Angelo.

Alexander the Sixth was not a likely man to afford any facilities of this kind to his cardinals, or any foreign prince. He had entered into no compact with the cardinals, except to purchase their votes for his election.

He had a fighting son, who had been lately a cardinal, to defend him. He would be a bold prince of his court, or prelate of his church, who would propose to him a general council.

The worthy cardinal or bishop, who would venture on such a step, might expect to be consigned to the tender mercies of Cæsar Borgia's domestic executioner, who attended on him in public, and who accompanied him in all his marauding expeditions.

Every one is agreed that Alexander ought to be deposed, and that his deposition should take place in a general council. Who was to convoke the council? What was to be done with Cæsar Borgia while it was holding? What guarantee was there

in the word or in the oath of Alexander, for any engagement that might be entered into by him, in that council, either to attend it, to maintain its authority, or to protect those who were supposed inimical to him in it?

In such an exceptional state of things, who were the proper persons to take measures for convoking the general council, in the impossibility of getting Alexander to do it by fair means?

Was it the christian princes, or the exiled cardinals, or the dignitaries of the Churches, and superiors of the convents, in various parts of Italy?

Would Savonarola have been justified in using all his efforts to effect that object?

Was Savonarola, as a Christian minister, bound in duty to recognize the acts as lawful and valid of a Pontiff who had committed acts of simony of the most scandalous description, of a usurper who had intruded into the chair of St. Peter, and scandalized the Christian commonwealth?

The dissemination of heresy is accounted one of the highest crimes against the Church and society at large.

The practice of simony is the highest crime of all against God and religion, and the people who profess it.

The Church, in the case of heresy takes cognizance of all crimes committed against its doctrines, and deals with them as she thinks proper.

But in the other case—of simony—where the rulers of the Church are the offenders against God, religion, and the people belonging to it, who is to denounce publicly the crime and the criminals?

When is the denunciation to be made? How is it to be done? Where is it to be attempted?

St. Vincent of Ferrers, and Savonarola must have thought deeply and anxiously on those subjects. I do not pretend to say, whether they thought well or ill in regard to them, when they answered these questions to their own satisfaction, when they determined that the denunciation was to be made, when the Church was grievously afflicted by the crimes of its ruler, with

the view of inciting those whose province it might be, in an extraordinary emergency, to convoke a general council for the removal of the scandals which were bringing ruin on religion; that the proper platform for the exertions in the cause of such reform, of all spiritual men devoted to religion, was a general council of the Church.

In one of his sermons, Savonarola speaks of the necessity of a general council, but he asks, who is then to call "an assemblage of the Church, comprized of all good prelates, abbots, and righteous ecclesiastics?"

"The Church, it must be remembered, was only represented there, where the light of the Holy Spirit shone. There scandals were to be denounced, iniquity to be resisted, dignitaries of the Church practising simony to be removed. In that council, the bad ecclesiastics were to be brought to punishment, the good were to be preferred."

"But he whose province it would be, to call the bad to a severe account, and to protect the good, must be spotless and pure himself, and, therefore, is it that no council is now to be convoked."

The power of the Pope, not in his private capacity, but in his official one, aided by his prelates and divines in consistory or sacred congregation, to examine and enquire into matters of faith and morals, and to condemn doctrines held to be erroneous after due examination, cannot be called in question by Catholics. No general council is indispensably required for this exercise of pontifical authority.

In Bishop Kenrick's work on the Primacy, this subject is treated with much perspicuity:—

"In virtue of his office, the Pontiff teaches with authority, and directs his teaching to all the children of the Church, wherever they may be found, pastors and people: he pronounces judgment on all, whose faith is suspected, to whatever rank they may belong; he condemns heresy wherever it may have originated, or by whomsoever it may be supported; he calls on his colleagues, the bishops, to concur with him in the condemnation; he assembles them in council, to investigate and judge

with him the controversies that are raised, or to concur by their harmonious judgment and action in rooting out condemned errors; he confirms and promulgates their definitions of faith, and he incessantly guards the sacred deposit of divine doctrine." *

Further on, the same writer observes: "It is the undoubted right of the Pope to pronounce judgment on controversies of faith. All doctrinal definitions already made by general councils, or by former Pontiffs, are landmarks which no man can remove; but as the human mind may assail revelation in endless varieties of form, there must be always in the church an authority by which error under every new aspect may be effectually condemned. Nothing can be added to the faith originally delivered to the Saints, but points contained in the deposit of revelation may be expressly declared and defined, when the obscurity that may have existed as to the fact of their revelation has been dissipated. The assembly of a general council is always attended with immense difficulty, and is oftentimes utterly impracticable. The chief bishop is 'the natural organ of the church,' as Peter is styled by St. Chrysostom the mouth of the Apostles. In pronouncing judgments he does not give expression to a private opinion, or follow his own conjectures, but he takes for his rule the public and general faith, and tradition of the church as gathered from Scripture, the fathers, the liturgies and other documents, imploring the guidance of the Divine spirit, and using all human means for ascertaining the fact of revelation.

"It has been warmly disputed, whether a solemn judgment thus pronounced, wherein a doctrine is proposed to the church generally as necessary to be believed under pain of anathema, or an error is proscribed as opposed to faith with the same sanction, may be erroneous. The personal fallibility of the Pope in his private capacity, writing or speaking, is freely conceded by the most ardent advocates of papal prerogatives. But his official infallibility, *ex cathedra*, is strongly affirmed by St. Alphonsus de Ligouri, and a host of divines, in accordance, as I believe, with ancient tradition and the general sentiments of the church." *

* Bishop Kenrick's Primacy of St. Peter, p. 269.

"The assembly of the French clergy in 1682, contended that the Pope's judgment," continues Bishop Kenrick, "may admit of amendment, as long as it is not sustained by the assent and adhesion of the great body of bishops."

Finally, it is observed by Bishop Kenrick, that there are limits to the exercise of this power; and his observations so entirely cover the whole question of the condemnation of Savonarola by Alexander the Sixth, that I cite the passages in question in italics, though not so printed in the original: "*The plenitude of pontifical power in all that appertains to the government of the universal church is affirmed in the Florentine decree. . . .*

"*It is certain that this power must be used for edification, not for destruction: for the interest of faith and piety—for the maintenance of order and unity—in a word, for the good of the church. It is a government of justice, order, and law, to be conducted not arbitrarily and capriciously, but according to established canons or rules.*"*

This is sound doctrine, which no Roman Catholic, acquainted with his religion or faithful to his church, will dispute.

But the questions must force themselves on the mind of every reader of the life, and death, and doctrines of Savonarola—was the power exercised by Alexander the Sixth, in relation to that monk, used for edification? Was it used for the interests of faith and piety? Was it used for the maintenance of order and unity? Was it used for the good of the church? Was the government that used it then influenced by a spirit of justice, order and law? was it then conducted not arbitrarily and capriciously, but according to established canons and rules?

If these questions can be truly answered in the affirmative, then was the Dominican monk, Girolamo Savonarola, righteously judged and justly executed. But if they cannot be so answered, then was Savonarola's death an iniquitous proceeding, and his persecutors were enemies of justice and of God.

* The Primacy of the Apostolic See Vindicated, by Bishop Kenrick, p. 270. † Ibid. p. 271.

APPENDIX.

NOTICE OF THE BIOGRAPHIES OF SAVONAROLA AND OTHER WORKS WHICH TREAT OF HIS CAREER.

A BRIEF notice of the principal biographies and historical works which treat extensively of Savonarola, will enable the reader to form a just opinion of the authorities of which the Author has availed himself in these volumes, and to enquire after such of those works as he has not been able to obtain or examine.

Of the works relating to Savonarola that are favourable to his character, and ample in their details of his career, the life written in Italian by Burlamacchi, a friar of the Dominican order, which was first published in the appendix to the collection of historical monuments, entitled "Miscellanea Baluzii," and introduced there by the learned editor, Mansi, is of most value.*

The Dominican father, Pacifico Burlamacchi, known in the world as Filippo di Pietro Burlamacchi, was a convert of Fra Girolamo's, a secular person of a noble family, and high position in Lucca.

Razzi speaks of him as having a great veneration for Savonarola; "*un grand devoto del Padre Savonarola.*" After the death of Savonarola, in 1498, he determined on abandoning worldly pursuits, and in 1499 he received the Dominican habit in the convent of San Romano, in Lucca. He died with a great fame for sanctity, the 13th of February, 1519. He commenced the life of Savonarola in 1499, and states therein, that he was present at the execution of Savonarola.

It was after witnessing the execution of Savonarola and his companions, that the layman, Filippo Burlamacchi, entered the religious state in the order of Saint Dominick, under the name of Fra Pacifico.

Burlamacchi commences his biography with a declaration of his belief, that Fra Girolamo was a prophet and a martyr, and that he writes concerning that illustrious man, "the things that he had seen with his own eyes, or heard from his own lips, or that he had heard from other persons of veracity, or read in official documents."†

* La Vita del M R. P. F. Girolamo Savonarola de Ferrara Dell Ordine de S. Domenico Scritta dal P. Pacifico Burlamacchi Lucchese. Apud Miscellanea Stephani Baluzii. Edita Studio J. E. Mansi, Lucensis in 4 tom. Fol. Lucæ, 1791. — Tomus primus.

† Burlamacchi, tom. i. p. 530.

On this work I believe great reliance is to be placed, and from it I have taken freely such details as relate to matters of which its author could be cognizant. But, although I consider this work the principal store-house for information that is favourable to Savonarola, the reader will find my researches have not been confined to his pages or those of the apologists and advocates of Savonarola.

"There is a supplement," says the German writer, Dr. Hafe (the author of an elaborate critical notice of Savonarola's mission), "by Timotheo Bottoni, to Burlamacchi's biography recording miracles.

"I am uncertain what portion of this piece to attribute to Burlamacchi and what to Bottoni, and have only uncertain authorities to consult on the subject. In a new biography of Savonarola, Rudelbach, when speaking of both, separates Bottoni's supplement from Burlamacchi's work, and he remarks of the last-mentioned performance, that it was *first* published by J. E. Mansi, in the first volume of the new edition of the 'Miscellanea Baluzii,' (Lucca, 1761). It is from Burlamacchi's work with the supplement that Quetif has quoted. Everything Mansi has inserted in the first volume of his new edition of Baluzii's, commencing at p. 530, he took from a manuscript belonging to the Dominicans of the monastery of Lucca. But it may be from Bottoni's supplement alone, that Quetif has taken the long fragments under the name of Perusinus (Bottoni was born at Perugia), and Mansi himself remarks in the introduction, that the work is not altogether by Burlamacchi, but apparently an abridgment of it by Bottoni. But this work does not give the impression of being an abridgment, and it cannot be doubted but that there are some additions made to it later, in that part where Savonarola, the night before his death, in return for the disinterested proofs of friendship of his comforter, Nicolini, predicted to him future events, saying that Florence was to undergo great tribulations during the reign of a Pope of the name of Clement, (In quanti tribulationi ho predetto a questa citta, voglio dunque avvisarti del tempo di gran tribulatione. Sappi è nota la fine bene che cio avvera, quando sara un papa Clemente.) This is evidently written by one who had already suffered from the oppression of the imperial army under Clement VII. 1527, which happened after the death of Burlamacchi, and I venture with confidence to assert that it will not be found in the original work."

Mirandola John Francis Pico, nephew of the celebrated scholar of universal fame, wrote the life of Fra Girolamo. It was first published in the collection of the works of John Pico of Mirandola, and his own, which appeared in 1601, published in Basle, in folio. The title of the work is "Vita Rev. Patr. F. Hieron. Savonarola, Ord. Predic. Authori Ill. Joan Franc. Pico Mirandola Concordiæ Principi."

The edition from which I quote, is that of Paris, 1634, in 12mo., in 2 vols. The "Life" occupies 211 pages of the first volume.

The rest of the volume is taken up with the Compendium of Savonarola's Revelations.

The second volume contains the "Apologia pro Savonarola." His Epistles and some of his discourses, and notes and additions in reference to the assault on San Marco, the arrest of Fra Girolamo and his associates, their condemnation and death, the fate of his persecutors, and his works.

In the second volume of the Life of Savonarola, by John Francis Pico de Mirandola, there is inserted a very curious treatise on the works of Savonarola, composed by Fra Paulino Bernardino, O. S. D., under the direction of the Cardinal of the Inquisition, during the Pontificate of Paul the Fourth.

Discorso sopra la dottrina et opere del Rev. Pad. Girolamo Savonarola, O.S.D., &c., fatto in Roma sotto il Pontificado de Papa Paulo IV., alla presenza dell Illustrissimi et Reverendissimi Cardinale della Santa Inquisitione. Dal Reverendo Padre Maestro Fra Paulino Bernardino da Luca del Medesimo ordine. 1558., 54 pag.

In the title-page of Pico's work there is a portrait of Savonarola, with this inscription: "R. P. F. Hier Savonarola, Concinator Prophetus Natus Ferrariæ, 21 Sepr. 1452. | Ord. Predicat. ingressus, 26 April, 1475. Cruce et igne affectus fortiter acerbuit Florentiæ vigil ascentionis Domini. 23 Maii, 1498, anno 46."

"John Francis Pico de Mirandola is the first of a wide circle of celebrated biographers," says Professon Hafe,* "who have espoused the cause of the democratic monk; he was Count of Mirandola, and nephew to Giovanni Pico, so famous in the world of science, and at whose suggestion Savonarola established himself at Florence. The younger Picus was already bound to him by the bonds of friendship for six years (before he had taken up his regular residence at Florence), where he had published a work in defence of his prophecies, and an acute exposition of the nullity of the papal excommunication, commencing with this, certainly true, but, for a catholic, hazardous phrase in respect to Papal authority: 'malum esse in terris jusdicium, quod errare quandoque non possit'—for God alone is infallible.

"He intended, at first, writing Savonarola's life immediately after his martyrdom, but the numerous interruptions of his stormy political life prevented him from bringing it to a conclusion till long afterwards. He records the persevering, unlimited admiration of many individuals for Savonarola, but he does not express clearly his exact views relative to the Florentine commonwealth, nor the gradual development of the genius of Savonarola."

The family of John Francis Pico de Mirandola was one of the most illustrious houses of Italy. The origin of the Dukes of Mirandola and Counts of Concordia, in the annals of Modena, is traced up to the time of Constantine.

The life of John Francis, from the time of the death of Savonarola, was a continued succession of struggles with enemies, and misfortunes

* Dr. Karle Hafe, Neue Propheten, Notes.

domestic and public. In 1511, Muratori relates that his castle of Mirandola, strongly fortified, was besieged by the French troops and the Italian allies of Bologna, and, after a long defence, it was taken by the enemy. When John Francis Pico learned that the town of Concordia had been taken, and the garrison of three hundred men put to the sword, he was then labouring under severe illness.

He was allowed to retire into Tuscany with his family. On his departure, the Countess Francisca of Mirandola, the widow of his brother, with Galeotti, her son, were put in possession of his castle. After various vicissitudes of fortune, expulsions from his territory, and restoration to it, lawsuits with his nephew, controversies with parties who accused him of having coined and circulated base money, or rather alloyed certain gold pieces with an undue amount of inferior metals, of having even caused the artificer to be put to death by whom this adulteration had been carried into effect, he was finally murdered by his nephew Galeotti, in 1533, along with his son, Albert Pico, a young soldier of great promise and distinguished merit.

Works of Padre Vincenzo Marchese, O.S.D., which treat of Savonarola.

There will be found in this Life of Savonarola a great deal of very important original matter, and numerous extracts from letters of Savonarola, which have not appeared in any previous biography of Savonarola; for these I am indebted to the laborious researches of the Padre Vincenzo Marchese, a learned Italian friar of the Dominican Order, whose work, "Insigni Pittori Scultori e Architetti Domenicani," is well known to the learned of all nations. In a recent letter of Fra Vincenzo (dated 28th October, 1852), in reply to some inquiries of mine on the subject of this work, he observes:

"With respect to information concerning Savonarola, a few years ago I published two treatises, important for their matter, on this subject. The first piece was a poem in *terza rima*, entitled 'Cedrus Libani osia vita di Fra Girolamo Sovonarola Scritta da Fra Benedetto da Firenze, l'anno 1510,' wherein the life and tragical death of Savonarola are related. The poet was a disciple of Savonarola, and a member of the community of San Marco. This poem is inserted in the Appendix. No. 23, of the great work, entitled 'Archivio Storico Italiano,' of which 36 vols. 8vo. have already appeared. (Firenza, 1846, Viesseux Ed. Despensa xxxiv).

"The second treatise which I published in the same work, in the Appendix, No. 25 (Dispensa xxxvi. 1850), is entitled 'Lettere inedite di Fra Girolamo Savonarola E Documenti Concernenti lo stesso.' (Raccolti e ordinati, Dal Pad. Vin. Marchese, De Predicatori). This second treatise is still more important than the first, and it furnishes official matter respecting the Florentine Republic and its ambassador at the court of Rome, relating to the cause of Savonarola. I prefixed to it a long preface, in which I corrected a great part of the errors

committed by the numerous biographers of Fra Girolamo, and reformed the chronology of his life.

"I am of opinion that, without this second treatise of mine, it will be found impossible to avoid many errors in treating of the career of this great man."

The Padre Marchese is perfectly right in his opinion: a multitude of errors, with respect to dates especially, have crept into the several biographies of Savonarola; but, least of all, it will be found in that which I have chiefly relied on for my details, and have most frequently referred to for information—the work of Burlamacchi. Without the corrections of Padre Marchese, and the additional information contained in the letters of Savonarola heretofore inedited, it would be impossible to write his life accurately and faithfully.

The introduction to this treatise of P. Marchese occupies 35 pages. The collection of letters of Savonarola, and original documents, with the introduction of the editor, occupies 127 pages.

The number of Savonarola's letters is 14.

The number of documents, chiefly official letters of the Signoria to their ambassador in Rome, and from the latter, respecting the censures and proceedings against Savonarola, is 48.

The poem of the "Cedrus Libani," or versified life of Savonarola, is preceded by an introduction of Father Marchese of 16 pages. The poem occupies 33 pages. It was written in prison by the author—"in carcere compilato da Frate Benedetto di Fiorenza."

This remarkable biographical poem of the Cedrus Libani, written by Fra Benedetto, a native of Florence, one of the community of San Marco, who shortly after Savonarola's arrest was cast into prison apparently on account of his known attachment to Fra Girolamo, and ardent zeal in defence of his doctrines, was unknown to, or at least is unnoticed by, any of the preceding biographers of Savonarola. Fra Benedetto was not only a poet but a musician and a painter, and in the memoirs of "Insigni Pittori Scultori e Architetti Dominicani," he figures as *Fra Benedetto Miniatore*.

Benedetto had been in youth dissolute and irregular in his conduct, one of the licentious Compagnacci party. A sermon of Savonarola in 1495 effected such a revolution in his tastes and inclinations, that he abandoned the world for the cloisters of San Marco, in his twenty-fifth year.

In the assault on San Marco, the 6th of April, 1495, he was one of the most strenuous defenders of the Convent, and from the roof of the Church, where he had posted himself, he dealt great injury and even death, we are told by Padre Marchese, on the infuriated assailants —"tempesto terrivelmente su *gli Arrabiati* con rovine *e uccisione de molti.*"*

He says himself in his poem that he hurled stones from the roof

* Marchese, Auvertimento alla Poema *Cedrus Libanus.*

of the church with such effect and so continuously, that the enemy thought it rained stones—

"Che lapide paria del ciel piovessi."

And in a subsequent verse he says that Fra Girolamo was not aware of this, for when he descended with arms in his hands—

"Non sapeva il profeta io resistisse"—

he found the Padre in prayers; but when he saw Fra Benedetto, he turned to him and reprehended him for using those carnal arms, and said to him—

———", Figliuolo ascolta el mio sermone
Prende la croce a non arme e cottello."

Burlamacchi only mentions his appearing in arms at the commencement of the attack, and Savonarola reprehending him for having recourse to any but spiritual arms: and at a later period, when Fra Girolamo was made prisoner Fra Benedetto desiring to accompany his beloved master to prison, and the latter saying to him, "*Fra Benedetto per ubbidienza non venite.*"

Not long after the death of the "*gran Maestro,*" Fra Benedetto was incarcerated for inveighing openly against the enemies in general of Savonarola, and Pope Alexander in particular.

Whether he was released and subsequently imprisoned is not known, but it is clear from his own account, in one of his treatises entitled "Fons Vitæ," that he was in confinement in 1515, and from another, was still incarcerated in 1523; suspended from his sacred functions and condemned to perpetual imprisonment on a charge of homicide, of which crime he acknowledges that he was unintentionally guilty, having slain some person, apparently in his own defence, when an unjust attempt was made against his liberty—"Homicida sum, Domine, eo modo quo scis, et propter homicidium mancipatus sum carceri." . . . "Ecce Domine me quippe nolente, accidit homicidium et homicida sum." . . . "Hoc dico quia contra jus captus fui ab inquis laicis et a superioribus suspendentibus me coram secularibus in torturam: nec non mittentibus postea in compedibus et in manicis ferreis cibo et potu arctissimo deceptus eo modo quo Scis (Domine)."

All that is certainly known of his imprisonment is, that he was in confinement in 1509, and continued to be so in 1523. Of his death, or close of his career, there is no account whatever.

Of this work of Fra Benedetto relating to Savonarola, Marchese, the most competent of all men living to form an opinion of its value, says, "It is indubitably the most original that has come down to us respecting Savonarola."

The lives of the most eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects of the Dominican order, by the Father Marchese of the same Institute, faithfully translated from the Italian by the Rev. C. Meehan, contains much matter respecting Savonarola, in his relations to art, of great interest and excellence.

Guicciardini, in his "Istoria d'Italia" (Ed. Ven. 4to. 1595), treats largely and impartially of Savonarola. He was born in Florence in 1482, and died there in 1540. At the time of the Friar's death he was in his seventeenth year.

Guicciardini has given in the first three books of his History of Italy a detailed description of military and political movements from the time of the expulsion of the Medici and the invasion of the French, to the period of the death of Savonarola, and including that event, drawn from ancient sources.

Bernardino Corio's "Historia di Milano," (4to. Ven. 1554), enters very fully into the history of Savonarola's contest with Alexander the Sixth, and on the subject of that pontiff's election, coronation, and pontifical career, abounds in important details, and most valuable matter.

The most accurate and authentic account of Savonarola's career in a compressed notice introduced into an historical work, is that which we find in the Florentine history of Jacopo Nardi, a citizen of Florence, whose admirable performance treats of the events of the times from 1494 to the year 1531 inclusive. It is entitled "Le Historie Della Citta de Firenza."*

Nardi was a cotemporary of Savonarola and a witness of his execution.

"Far more copious, and more reliable than Guicciardini's notice, is Nardi's account of Savonarola," says Hafe, "in the second volume of his history of Florence. Nardi belonged to the same party of the people, he was exiled from his home at the restoration of the Medici in 1512. But he had a soul above falsehood, and gave an unimpassioned judgment at a time when other interests might have interfered with it, yet as one who had stood beside Savonarola's gallows."

The notice of Savonarola written by Nardi is a striking contrast to those biographies written by persons who not having an exact knowledge of the occurrences, treated them more in the manner of poets than historians.

He does not deny the embarrassing position in which Florence was placed by some of his prophecies, he does not attempt to break through the mystery that envelopes his revelations, while he recognizes those revelations as facts, but he speaks with admiration of his established influence, and admits that never had Florence been governed before in so christian a manner as during the life-time of this monk, who knew how to awaken in the breasts of men the natural love of freedom, and at the same time the love of God and of their neighbour.

The Florentine Secretary, in his works—"Tutti Le opere di Nicolo Machiavelli Citadino e Secretario Fioretino," (Ed. 4to. 1550, place published blank) in his treatise "Il Principe," and his Discoursi sopra la 1ma Deca de T. Livio, and also in one of his letters, makes mention of Savonarola, and in both places with evident veneration for his character.

* The edition I quote from is the 4to. published in Florence, 1584.

Machiavelli was a native of Florence, and a cotemporary of Savonarola. He was born in 1469, and died in 1527.

In one of his poems, entitled Decennale (see Appendix to the Opere, page 59), there is the following beautiful stanza, more indicative than any of his notices in prose of the estimation in which he held Savonarola.

"Ma quel che a molti, molto pui non piacque
E vi fe' disunir, fu quella scola
Sotto il cui segno vostra citta giacque:
Io dico di quel gran Savonarola
Il quel afflato di virtu divina
Vi tiene involto ocon le sue parole.
Ma perche molti timean la rovina
Veder a' lor patria à poco à poco
Sotto la sua prophetica dottrina,
Non si trovavo a riunirvi loco,
Se non cresceva, o se non era spento
Il suo lume divino con maggior foco."

"We have, on the testimony of Machiavelli," says Dr. Hafe, "and in the Compendium of the Revelations, by Savonarola, an authentic refutation of those miracles related by the disciples of Savonarola, at least, up to the year 1496, for he mentions that the evil one tried to persuade Savonarola that it was necessary to establish the belief in his prophecies by miracles, but that he, instead of consenting to have any performed by such agency, appealed to the example of Jonas, who only preached penance before Nineveh, and of John the Baptist, the greatest of the Prophets, of whom it is written, that he worked no miracles. But it was not till after his death that Savonarola's great miraculous powers began to appear, for by far the greater part of Pico's biography refers to events after the death of his hero; it is partly a defence of him, and a recitation of what had been said of him by his friends and enemies, and partly a record of the miraculous cures operated by himself or his relics. He appeared, on Pico's authority, more than a hundred times after his death, but always to those only who had a lively interest in him, occasioned either by a bad conscience for having treated him cruelly, or to those who were filled with doubts about his sanctity, or, in fine, to those who entertained a great affection for him."*

Philippe de Commines, a cotemporary and acquaintance of Savonarola, in his *Memoires sur les Principaux faits et gestes de Louis XI., et Charles VIII., Rois de France*, (Ed. Rouen, 1634), makes two valuable references in his work to Savonarola; the first, giving an account of an interview with the Friar, and of his wonderful power and influence as a preacher and great moral reformer; the second, narrating his death, and commenting on his career and character.

The work of Savonarola's bosom friend, Beneviene, "Trattao de Maestro Domenico Beneviene, Prete Fiorentino in defensione et pro-

* Professor Hafe's Neue Propheten.

bationę della Dottrina et prophetie predicate de Frate Hieronymo da Ferrara (Ed. 4to. Firenza, 1496)," it will be seen, must have been published certainly more than a year before Savonarola's death. It is necessary to distinguish between the two brothers, Domenico and Girolamo Beneviene, both friends of Savonarola's, and writers concerning his mission or his works.

Savonarola's Latin treatise, "De Simplicitate vitæ Christianæ," was translated into Italian by Girolamo Beneviene. He was the writer also of those singular spiritual songs, "Non fu mai pui vel sollazzo," and the "To tre Once almen de Speme," which were intended as substitutes for the Carneval songs.

"What has been written (says Hafe) by Domenico Beneviene, surnamed Scotti, on account of his theological acuteness (from David Scotti, a Jesuit, remarkable for his profound theology), in defence of Savonarola's doctrine and prophecies, even with all its partialities, is a document of value. On the other hand, Catharino Polito has reported all the calumnies raised against Savonarola by his cotemporaries and the following generation, incited thereto equally by his hatred of the Dominican order which he (Polito) had deserted, and to the Reformation and its promoters, among whom he places Savonarola, and he expresses a wish that if not his disciples, at least that all his sermons, might be publicly burned in the market place of Florence." *

The Master of the Ceremonies of Alexander the Sixth, subsequently elevated to the episcopal dignity, has left a diary devoted to the preservation of the acts of Alexander and the affairs of his court, some portions of which have not reached our times; this journal has been published in Echard's "Corpus Historiarum Medii Ævi," tom. ii., and was also separately edited by Leibnitz, from which edition the summary of the diary has been taken, that will be found in the Second Volume of this work. In the latter part of the diary, an account of Savonarola's conduct in relation to the ordeal, his condemnation and death, are recorded as they were reported by Alexander's agents at Florence to his Holiness.

"Alexander's side of the question," says Dr. Hafe, "is peremptorily defended by Burchard, the papal master of the ceremonies, who relates Savonarola's hard fate, and communicates the agreement about the proof by fire, certified by the joint signatures of the parties to it. According to Burchard, Savonarola acknowledged and with his own hand signed the acknowledgment, that he had had no divine revelations, but that he had sought to terrify men by a pretended supernatural knowledge of their hidden sins, which he had previously learned by very illicit means."

Paulus Jovius, in several of his works, treats of Savonarola. Vita Leonis X., Basil (1567), Iscrittioni sotto le vere imagini de gli uomini famosi (Fir. 4to. 1552).

This prelate of unenviable *notoriety*, says of Savonarola in the latter

* Hafe, Neue Propheten.

treatise, "With his furious manner of preaching, so unrestrainedly and blaspheming the morals of Alexander the Sixth, that he put in doubt his sacred authority. . . . . He was hanged like a robber, in the centre of the square, and soon after burned. But the minds of men were variously affected; some, being inflamed with hatred against him, cried out, that he was justly executed; others, with tears in their eyes, piously collected his ashes, as the remains of one unjustly put to death. Worthy of singular praise is the work written by him against the sages, dilettante, and sophists of his age, 'The Glorious Triumph of the Cross.' . . . .

"If his epitaphs were to be believed, one would say, he deserved the name of an impious and holy man at the same time."*

In Jovius's "Elogi D'Uomini Illustri di guerra Antichi et Moderni (Fir. 4to. 1554)," there is a short notice of the career of Cæsar Borgia, which contains some things not to be met with elsewhere, with regard to his personal appearance and his end.

Muratori, in his "Annali d'Italia," (Ed. 12mo. in 17 tomi, Nap. 1785), in his relation of affairs in 1498, expresses his opinion of the character of Savonarola in the most favourable terms on all points, except in refusing obedience to the Pope's commands, and taking a part in the secular affairs of the Florentine Republic. But even with these errors, he speaks of him as "a most holy man," "of wonderful unction and sanctity," "a true servant of God," "of the purest morals," and "wholly devoted to the spiritual welfare of the people."†

Muratori was born in 1672, and died in 1750.

Filippo de Nerli has written "Commentarii de fatti civili accorsi dentro la citta de Firenze del anno 1215, sino all 'anno 1537 (Augusta, 1661)," which contains much useful information on the subject of Savonarola and his times.

But it is to be borne in mind, that the author's sentiments on the subject of clerical interference in secular affairs, lead him sometimes into extreme views, which affect his judgment, with respect to the motives of spiritual persons for interposing in matters regarding the material interests of the people.

"Nerli, in his commentary on the condition of Florence," says Professor Hafe, "has certainly recognised Savonarola's moral and religious importance, but with the qualifying feelings of an aristocrat, who, devoted to the interests of monarchy, condemns the interference of a monk in the affairs of State as uncalled for, and his democratic theocracy as unseasonable. The known venal Giovio (Jovius) speaks with respect of his moral power and high endowments; he knows that nothing has so much power to captivate men, as the eloquence of a pious, honourable person, who advocates the cause of liberty; which Savonarola was anxious to promote by his political influence."

The "Apologia del Rev. Pad. Fra. Tommasso Neri, Fiorentino.

* Inscrittioni, lib. i. p. 84. † Ann. d'Ital. A.D. 1498, vol. xiii. p. 464.

In Defeso del R. P. F. Gir. Savonarola (Flor. 1564)," is valuable for many details respecting the Friar's connexion with political affairs, not to be found in other biographies.

Natalis Alexander, of the Dominican order, in his "Historia Ecclesiastica" (fol. Par. 1714, p. 175), devotes about a page of his work to the vindication of Savonarola.

Turon, of the same order, in his "Histoire des Hommes illustres de l'order de Saint Dominique (4to. Par.)," enters more largely into the same subject and with the same views.

The valuable work, "Scriptores ordinis predicatorum," commenced by the Dominican father, Quetif, and completed by father Echard of the same order (fol. Par. 1721), contains a brief notice of the life and works of Fra Girolamo of eight pages in the first volume commencing page 885.

Father Quetif's work of references to the history of Savonarola, contains the life of Savonarola, by Pico of Mirandola, and the compendium of revelations in the first volume; the second contains the properly so-called collection of references, namely, a supplement to Pico's biographical materials, and apologetic remarks by the editor. "There is a large collection of documents," observes Dr. Hafe, "published along with this biography, relating to Savonarola's history, together with remarkable passages from Nardi, and from the important joint report by Burlamacchi and Bottoni; in fine, he tells, in rather an exulting strain, of the unfortunate end which all Savonarola's enemies met with, forgetting that Savonarola himself, and Pico, had perished equally miserably, (the latter was slain in a church, by his nephew, in 1533).

Ambrosio Catharino Polito Vescovo de Minori, in his "Discorso contra la Dottrina e la profezie di Fra Girolamo Savonarola" (Ed. 12mo. Ven. 1548, page 200), professes to bark like a faithful dog against a wolf in sheep's clothing, a son of Belial in a monk's habit and a cowl, and he certainly barks and bites with a canine fury unparalleled in theological controversy.

This work, now rarely to be met with, I found, after much fruitless search in other libraries, in the "Bibliotheque Nationale" in Paris.

The arrogance, virulence, and violent invective of this worthy prelate surpass anything to be met with in any literary warfare I have ever met with.

The bishop seldom reasons, he scorns to inquire, and thinks it beneath the episcopal dignity to investigate any disputed accusation.

The meek prelate sets out with comparing himself to "St. Augustine, who wrote against divers heretics, Arrian, Manichean, Pelagian, Donatist, and various other sorts of beasts,—*e varie altri sorti di bestie*,—which at that time were scattered over the church."

In the same style of Christian mildness and amenity, he defends himself from a charge that has been brought against him, of "biting his opponents like a dog." "But mark well, in the first place," he observes, "those whom I bite—*quelli che io mordo*—consider well

what are their errors which I reprehend. And if those whom I bite are no longer men, but have become beasts,—*ma sono divenute bestie*,—in complaining of my bites, do they not discover and demonstrate that they are of the same nature—*di quelli carne medesime ?*"

Having conclusively shewn that Savonarola and his fellow-sufferers were beasts—and therefore their memories even, were to be gnawed to pieces after their death—with the same happy use and applications of his school logic, he proves, with an amount of boldness bordering on blasphemy, that it is the work of our blessed Saviour he is doing, in biting dead men's characters.

"*Therefore*, if the devil has his dogs to bite people, why should not Christ have his, to bite the beasts? *per qual cagione non debbe Christo haver i suoi per mordere le bestie?* Who does not know that heretics in the Scripture are called beasts ?"

The prelate of the Minors, who evidently delights more in his metaphorical dog's teeth than in his crozier, proceeds to mangle the reputation of Fra Girolamo after this fashion : "Behold, then, this doctrine of Fra Girolamo! I pronounce this doctrine to be presumptuous and insolent, inquisitive, erroneous and lying, variable and contradictory with itself, sophistical and adulatory, audacious, temerarious and contumelious, obstinate and contentious, scandalous and pernicious."

Several other adjectives, equally alarming to pious ears, are poured forth by the prelate of the Minors, which we dispense with citing.

The "Biblioteca dell' Eloquenza Italiana par Fontanini con le annotazioni del Signore Apostole Zeno," (4to. Ven. 1753), extols the learning and other great qualities of this vituperative prelate.

Moreri states that this prelate was born in Vienna about 1482—was a professor of law, and took the Dominican habit in Florence. (This must have been after Savonarola's death.) He quarrelled with the Dominicans, went to Rome, abandoned his order, and obtained a bishopric of another institute. He assisted at the council of Trent. He wrote vehemently against the Cardinal Cajetan, Domingo Soto, and Luther, as well as Savonarola. He died in 1552, aged 70 years.

Padre Martino Delrio, a Jesuit of some celebrity, in his Treatise on Magic, adopting all the calumnies of former writers against Savonarola, thus speaks of the reforming friar of Ferrara :—

"In my opinion, it is in vain that some persons attempt to defend the revelations of Girolamo Savonarola, which were condemned by the Apostolic tribunal. Many things were predicted by this man in regard to the reformation of the church, the conversion of the Moors and the Turks, and of the prosperity of the Florentines, which, he said, his hearers would witness before their death, adding that these prophecies were immutable and absolute ; of which, notwithstanding, scarcely any of the things predicted came to pass, and the greater part, within the period of the succeeding hundred years, not only did not occur, but things quite contrary to them happened.

"But, on account of the enthusiasm of his adherents, and the odium

in which many held Alexander VI. and the house of Medici, it came to pass that some historians inconsiderately undertook his defence, or called in question the justice of the sentence which was fulminated against him. In truth, thus as the event showed that his prophecies were false, so likewise his contumacy towards the general of his order, and his contempt of the excommunication of the Pontiff, (which even though it were clearly unjust, ought to have been feared), and other similar acts, are powerful arguments, which prove his arrogance, his obstinacy, and diabolical illusion. Let us read what Rafael Volaterrano, who evidently wrote the truth, as well as what Guicciardini, although somewhat inclined to favour Savonarola, published on this subject. But those who defend the judgment of the Apostolic See in this case, do not manifest more charity and prudence than those who contend for the honour of a particular person. Neither does this take away in any degree from the reputation of the most illustrious Dominican religion, which, as a constellation, shines in the heavens of the church militant, no more than from the purity of the choir of the angels does the faction of Luzbel, nor from glory of the Apostolate the perfidy of Judas." *

The war between the Jesuits and the Dominicans was raging fiercely, when Padre Delrio, of the society of Jesus, found an argument in the life and labours of Savonarola, whereon to fix a charge of *arrogance, obstinacy, and diabolical illusion* against a member of the rival order of Dominicans.

Matthew Flaccius, in his "Catalogus Testium veritatis," (Aug. 1562), and Theodore Beza in his "Icones," (Genev. 4to. 1580) both with great earnestness contend for possession of Savonarola's faith for Protestantism, and have their claims sifted by Bayle, and shewn to be invalid.

"Flaccius praises him particularly, because he thinks the friar denied the supremacy of the Pope, and administrated the Lord's Supper under the two species. As to the first, he did not always think so; in speaking of the chalice in two striking passages, (Triumphus Crucis, iii. 16, ii. 10), he mentions that he only administered the sacrament under one form, which is quite consistent, and agrees with the maxim of St. Thomas; that the more perfect manner is only meant for the priesthood." †

John Poggius, a cotemporary of Savonarola, wrote a work which he published at Rome, against the friar, which Bayle refers to as affording proofs that are adduced in a later work of Vauprivas, of Savonarola's guilt of innumerable crimes. "John Poggius, after having refuted the reasons of Savonarola, and exhorted him to return to obedience to the Pope, proves him to be an infidel, an infamous apostate, a seditious man, a disturber of the public peace and happiness, a schismatic, a rebel to the supreme bishop, and therefore justly excommunicated." ‡

* Delrio, Disquisitio Mag. Lib. ii. cap. 1, sec. vi. † Dr. Hafe, Neue Propheten.
‡ Bayle, Art. Savon. vol. v. p. 61.

"A person (says Bayle) named John Poggius, wrote a treatise, which was printed at Rome, containing thirteen chapters in all, which, addressing his speech to Savonarola himself, after having proved his predictions to be false, particularly, for that having sent his cap to Charles Strozzi, when upon his death-bed, and foretold that he should be instantly and thoroughly cured by putting it on, the said Strozzi had no sooner touched it, but he gave up the ghost; and, in the like manner, having sent it to a goldsmith called Cosmo, and to several other sick persons for the same purpose, viz., of a cure, foretold and promised, they all of them died in a very small time; and, likewise, for that he had publicly affirmed, that John Picus of Mirandola would recover of the illness, of which he died, two days after that prediction. I say, the said John Poggius, after having confuted the reasons of Savonarola, and exhorted him to return under the obedience of the Pope, proves him to be an infidel, an infamous apostate, a seditious man, a disturber of the public peace and happiness, a schismatic, a rebel to the supreme bishop, and therefore justly excommunicated. Read also this other passage:—

"Quam ille multa de Ecclesiæ reformatione, de Turcarum et Maurorum conversione, de Florentinorum fælicitate, quæ mox ad implenda et astantium multi erant visari antequam moreretur prædixit? addens (in revelationum compendio) illas absolutas et immutabiles Prophetias esse? Attamen nihil horum ferè adhuc contigit, pleraque omnia intra centum ferme annos contraria contigerunt.

"Martin del Rio reproaches him in these words, with having foretold absolutely, and without condition, three or four things as immutable and near events, the reverse of which had happened before the revolution of a century. He had foretold the conversion of the Moors and Turks, and the felicity of Florence, that is to say, according to the principles of democracy. But, so far were the Florentines from recovering that government, that they fell under a monarchical one.

"He seemed to be so firmly persuaded of the certainty of his predictions, and had so rivetted that persuasion in the monks of his convent, that he and they consented to verify by the test of fire the following positions:—

"1. The Church of God wants reformation.

"2. It shall be scourged.

"3. It shall be renewed.

"4. Florence shall be so too, after having been scourged.

"5. There shall be hopes after that, and the infidels shall be converted to Jesus Christ.

"6. All these things shall happen in our days.

"7. The excommunication of Friar Jerome is void, those who pay no regard to it do not sin!

"He affirmed, that he had such a distinct view of futurity, and was so thoroughly satisfied with the evidence of that object, that it would have been as difficult for him not to give his assent thereto, as to deny

the first principles: It is in this strain that a person must speak, who desires that what he preaches up in a prophetical manner should make a deep impression upon people's minds; but the return from this voyage is somewhat dangerous."*

John Francis Buddæus, in his "Exercitatio historica politica de Artibus tyrannicis, Hier. Sav. (Jenæ. 1690). Retractatio dissertationis de Artibus tyrann. Hier. Sav. in Parerga, Hist. Theol." (Halæ. 1703), is only surpassed by Bayle in the rancour of his animosity to Savonarola. He set up the falsified process, in the case of the Dominicans, against the testimonies of Guicciardini and other eminent cotemporary historians.

Bayle, in his Critical Dictionary (article, Savonarola),† has collected with great industry every unfavourable notice that he could find of the friar, in any work that he could lay his hands on, dispensing with his customary critical fastidiousness, in availing himself of materials for his notices. There is nothing so manifestly unfair and unjust in the whole work of Bayle, as his critique on Savonarola.

And I am at a loss to account for the fact, except on the supposition, that Bayle had a profound contempt for a man of the most exalted genius like Savonarola, having a strong conviction of the truths of the Christian religion.

Bayle being a man unquestionably of great genius himself, was unwilling to believe that any other person, equally gifted, could be a true Christian, and, what was worse, a Roman Catholic, believing all the doctrines of his church, and finding fault with nothing in it, but its abuses.

"Bayle has collected together," says Dr. Hafe, "all the evidence which makes Savonarola appear as a false prophet, and concludes that he only used religion to gain his own ambitious ends, and was therefore not unjustly condemned. And yet, previous to this article of his in the 'Critical Dictionary,' he gives an exposition of the fluctuations of Protestant judgment in respect to Savonarola as represented by Buddeus, who, in the ornate style of his heterogeneous learning, becoming only in a school-boy, and without any real historical study, denounced the friar as an ambitious demagogue, but when more maturely educated he refuted himself."

The learned Father Feyjoo, in his "Teatro Critico Universal, O Discursos varios et para Desengano de Errores Dommunes,"‡ and also in his "Cartas Euditas y Curiosa,"§ assails the character of Savonarola and his advocates in a spirit of rancorous hostility, but with an appa-

* Bayle's Dictionary, vol. v. p. 61.

† In this instance, I have departed from the course I have followed throughout this work, with very few and unimportant exceptions, namely, quoting from the originals of the works I have referred to. Not having Bayle's work in the original at hand, I have used Des Maizeaux, 2nd edition, fol. Lon. 1738.

‡ Teatro Critici, 8to. Mad. 1778, vol. i.; Disc. 4mo. Sec. iv. p. 8, et vol. iii: Prol. pol. Sec. vi. 10, 1.

§ Cartas Euditas 4to. Mad. 1750, vol. iii. carta xii. p. 153.

rent critical acumen and coolness of judument that conceals the strong prepossessions and prejudices of a rationalist philosophy, verging on indifferentism in matters of religious belief, which characterize in style and spirit the strictures of Bayle on Fra Girolamo.

Barsanti availed himself of a diary of a cotemporary and most ardent admirer of Savonarola, Lorenzo Violi, a Florentine, who was in the habit of attending the sermons of Fra Girolamo, of taking with infinite pains accurate notes of them, of making reports of the same, and giving them to the press during the life-time of Fra Girolamo, and therefore, it is to be presumed, with his correction of the reports.*

Lorenzo Viole says that one Giovanni Berlingheri had the original autograph, examination, and statements of Fra Girolamo in his possession, and there saw it in print, and on comparing it with the printed copies, he declared "they differed as much as day and night." . . . . . "The truth was not written in these documents," &c.

The "Venerable Father Barsanti" wrote the "Storia del Padre Girolamo Savonarola, O.S.D." (Livorno 1782), and defended the memory of the father with great zeal and success. The biography is inserted in the "Memoriæ Istoriche Litterati."

Touron, in his "Histoire des Hommes Illustre de l'Ordre de St. Dominique," (Par. 4to. 1743, tome xxiii. liv. 23) gives a memoir of Savonarola, extending to eighty pages, written in defence of the doctrines and labours of the renowned monk of his order, but without any critical acumen or research.

The Dominican father, Guglio Bartoli, wrote the "Apologia del Padre G. Savonarola, O.S.D. Dedicata al granduca Pietro Leopoldo." (Firen. 1782.)

His views may be comprehended from the following passage: "We do not say behold a martyr and a hero worthy of an Apotheosis! but behold a man of pure and spotless faith, of a zeal innocent *yet capable of opposing to great evils great remedies*, a man of great genius and of spotless morals."

Mirandola refers to a work which I have not been able to find in any library: "Responsioni Del Pad. P. da Fuecchio dei ordini di Frati Minori (Franciscani) alli conclusioni di Fra Leonardi del ordini di San Augustino Contra il Revd. Padre Savonarola," 19 pages.

Tiraboschi, in his "Storia della Letteratura Italiana," (8vo. Firen. 1813), treats extensively of the wonderful eloquence and excellent doctrine of Savonarola. He enters at large into the subject of Savonarola's attendance at the death of Lorenzo de Medici, adopting Politian's relation of that scene as being the most favourable to Lorenzo.

Mr. Roscoe, in his "Life of Lorenzo de Medici, called the Magnificent," (9th Ed. Bohn, 12mo. 1847) has taken a very unfavourable view of the character and conduct of Savonarola, a matter to be most deeply regretted by all who are acquainted with the distinguished literary attainments and capabilities of that eminent author. The fact is, Mr.

* Marchese Avvertimento alla Poema "Cedrus Libani."

Roscoe knew nothing of Savonarola except through the writings of the partizans and adherents of the Medici.

He did not deem it necessary, in treating of the life of Lorenzo, to enter into the subject of Savonarola's history, except in the most cursory manner. Nor indeed was it necessary for the author of Lorenzo's biography to do more; but in doing even so much, it would have been well for Savonarola's memory if Mr. Roscoe had made himself acquainted with the writings of that friar and the works of his biographers, for had he done so, most assuredly he never would have represented Savonarola as a wretched fanatic and an arrant impostor.

"Truth fears nothing," says Dr. O'Connor, "so much as the supineness of those who will not take the trouble of minute examination. 'Nonnulli, tædio veritatis investigandæ, cuilibet opinioni potius ignavi succumbunt, quam exploranda veritate pertinaci diligentia perseverare volunt,' says Minutius Fælix.

"Acknowledging the superior abilities of Mr. Roscoe, of Liverpool, reluctantly do I venture to apply this passage to his account of the exemplary Dominican, whose fate I have described, and deplore. For Mr. Roscoe's talents, and for his public and private virtues, I, in common with thousands, entertain the most sincere respect; but he will allow me to say that in his account of Savonarola he has been misled by Nardi, of whom Giannotti complains to Varchi that his commentaries are a heap of falsehoods. Even Lorenzo de Medici, though stung by the opposition of Savonarola, acknowledged that he acted from sincerity of heart, and sent for him to attend him on his death bed."*

Audin de Rians, a distinguished man of letters of Florence, published, in 1847, a beautiful edition in 8vo. of the poems of Savonarola, a summary of his life, his treatise on government, "Trattato circa il regimento è goberno della citta di Firenza," collated and edited with great care.

In the admirable work of Massimo D'Azeglio, entitled, *Nicolo de Lapi ovvero, I Palleschi e I Piagnone*, (Firenza, 12mo, 1845), we find some account of the faithful friends, followers of Savonarola, and their fortunes after his death, especially of such of them as lived to witness and to share in the horrors of the siege of Florence, in 1529 and 1530.

The "Histoire de Savonarola," par Mons. Piget Carlé, Docteur en Theologie (8vo. Par.), is a popular biography, written by an amiable man, enamoured of his subject, and acquainted only with the writings of the advocates of Fra Girolamo.

The "Æsthetique de Savonarola," par Mons. E. Cartier, de la societe Royale des Antiquaris, is an admirable treatise *envisagent* Savonarola as a reformer in art. It was first published in the "Annales Archeologiques," in 1847.

"La Poesie Chretienne, dans l'Art," par Mons. A. F. Rio (8vo. Par. 1836), contains a very elaborate notice of Savonarola's efforts to banish paganism from art, education, and religion that exists.

* Columbanus, No. VII. Rev. C. O'Connor, D.D.

A recent German work of great merit,—*Neue Propheten—Drei Historisch—Politiche Kirchenbilder*,—by Dr. Karle Hafe, Professor of the University of Jena, (Leipsig, 1851, 12mo.), among the "New Prophets" of whom it treats, has Savonarola, and dedicates a large portion of his work to the examination of his character, his writings, and the proceedings which terminated in his death. This examination is made with remarkable ability, with critical acumen, and accuracy of observation, that has not been surpassed by Bayle in his notice of Savonarola, nor equalled, perhaps, by any other writers who have treated of him. But Dr. Hafe, who never lets his judgment be biassed by prejudices of any kind, except those of a Lutheran Doctor of Divinity, abandons all critical acumen when the claims of the reformation to Savonarola are under consideration. Fra Girolamo is, therefore, with Dr. Hafe, "The last Prophet of the Reformation."*

We, therefore, need not be surprised to find Savonarola, the "last Prophet of the Reformation," associated in this Lutheran doctor's work with the first martyr of the Reformation, John Huss.

Several other German biographies, and critical notices of the life of Savonarola, have been published within the last fifteen or eighteen years.

Batesden collected the principal works of Savonarola, and published them at Leyden, in 6 vols. 12mo., in 1633.

This collection in part was re-published in London, with the addition of the biography of Fra Girolamo, by Mirandola, in 1681.

Lastly, I have to notice "The Life and Times of Savonarola," (8vo. Lon. 1813). This biography is the only original one of Savonarola that has been given to the English public to the present time.

This work required research. It contains a large amount of information, and has been brought out in an unpretending form, and at a very small price.

At the present time, eminent men of letters are occupied with the life and labours of Savonarola in several parts of the world: in Florence, Signore Pasquale Vilari; in Alexandria, in Piedmont, Signore F. B. Aquarone, Professor in the Collegio Nazionale; in Mont Pellier, a Professor named De Yens; and, finally, Il Padre Marchese, in his new work, entitled, "San Marco Illustrato," and where, in the second book, the career of Savonarola occupies two-thirds of the volume.

* Neue Propheten, p. 141.

No. II.

THE WORKS OF SAVONAROLA.

De Rians, in his notice of the works of Savonarola, observes justly, that many treatises of Savonarola figure in the catalogues of booksellers with erroneous indications of their subjects, and still more so of the dates of publication, and yet are found more frequently erroneous than in all other matters, in the dates of composition, for which the dates of publication are frequently set down. Moreover, in almost all the published lists of Savonarola's writings, fragments of his treatises, bearing on particular subjects, are inserted as complete treatises, so that the same pieces are often found repeated in catalogues. As far as De Rians' catalogue goes, it is the most correct that ever has appeared, but it is not made so much for ordinary literary purposes as for the use of adepts in bibliography.

Moreover, it rejects all editions but original ones, printed in Florence, which have come to his knowledge, and consequently his catalogue is very incomplete; as many pieces, letters, tracts, and the shorter of Savonarola's compositions, are only to be found in the two principal biographies by Mirandola and Burlamacchi.

I have spared no pains to render the present list as complete as it can be made. Without possessing the principal works of Savonarola, I could not have accomplished this task. I have not encumbered this notice with a statement of the different editions known to exist of the several treatises. I have given the earliest edition of each work that I happen to have met with, to know of, or which I have found cited by biographers of Savonarola, whose works are esteemed.

Several catalogues of the works of Savonarola have been given by the biographers of Fra Girolamo, by Cave, Quetif, Wharton, and De Rians. Most of these authors have divided them into numerous classes. Pico de Mirandola into several, such as ascetic, dogmatic, polemical, apologetic, prophetic, parenetic, &c. This arrangement serves only to confuse inquiry. The English biographer has arranged the works in their chronological order. De Rians has placed them in the order of his examination of the original editions and manuscripts known to him in various Florentine libraries.

After various experimental arrangements, it seemed to me the best course would be a modification of the preceding methods, making a division of them into four classes:—

1. Miscellaneous Prose Treatises — Tracts, Expositions, Meditations, Dialogues.
2. Epistles.
3. Sermons and Exhortations.
4. Spiritual Songs and Lyrics—Laude.

[*To such of the following works of Savonarola as are in my possession, I have prefixed an asterisk.*]

CLASS I.—MISCELLANEOUS TREATISES.

* Triumphus crucis gloriosus; Sive de veritate Fidei Libri quatuor: sine nota anni loci aut typog. Ed. 4to. Lat. et Ital. Trionfo delle Croce. L'autore stesso il fece volgare dopo averlo scritto in latina, in 1495, 1496.

* De Simplicitate Vitæ Christianæ, Libri 5, Ven. 12mo. 1532. Tradotti in volgare da Hieronimo Benevieni.

* Expositio In Orationem Dominicam Quadruplex. Berthold. Ascensii, 16mo. 1510. Tradotto in Volgare—Exposizione Sopra il Paternoster compuesto in latino da un suo amico; Fir. 1494. Sc. in 1494.

De divisione omnium Scientiarum Ugolino Verino Florentino, Hier Savonarole Ferrar. Ord. Pred. . . . Necnon Apologeticus de ratione Poeticè artis. Vide de Rians Bibliografia.

This work exists in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, under the title of Opus de divisiones ordine et utilitate omnium scientiarum, necnon poesis ratione, Libri IV. lib. iv. agit de re poetica. In black letter, without date or name of publisher.

Compendium Totius philosophiæ tam naturalis quam moralis, Libris XV. Ven. 8vo. 1542. Vide Vit. Sav. par J. F. Pico de Mirandola, tom. i. page 19.

Cave describes this work as "Margarita Philosophiæ Seu rationalis et Moralis Philosophiæ principia ab Orontio Finæo aucta et Castigata; Basle 1535, 4to." See note for important matter.

Compendium Logicæ, Lib. primus. Flor. 4to. 1492; Lib. secundus. 1497.

* Eruditorium Confessorum Ascensio, 16mo. 1510.

Dialogus. De veritate Prophetica. Flor. 4to. 1497.

—— Solatium Itineris mei, Lib. VII.; Gen. 8vo. 1536; Ven. 16mo. 1537. In Italiano, Ven. 8vo. 1547, 1556.

The only copy of this work I have seen, I found in the library of the Court of Cassation, in Paris, in a small vol. 12mo., containing several treatises of Savonarola. The "Sollatium Itineris" is thus headed: Dialogus, Interloquotores Spiritus et Animi.

Elenchus Librorum hujus Dialogi: Lib. 1. De Deo. 2. De veritate fidei. 3. De Messia contra Hæbreos. 4. De articules Fidei Contra Philosophos. 5. De veritate Articulorum Fidei per rationes probabiles et de convenientia Sacramentorum. 6. De vita futura, de pœnis malorum et gloria bonorum. 7. De vita Patriæ Cœlestis.

Tractato Contra li Astrologi, 1mo. Ed.

—— 2ndo. L'Astrologia Divinatrice ; Firenze, 1495, 4to. (64 pages).

—— Compendio di Revelazioni ; Firenze, 1495, 4to. ; in Latin, Compendium Revelationum ; Florent. Ricorrecta, the 5th Sept. 1495 (106 pages).

—— Della Grandezza della Amore de Jesu Christo (18 pages), included in an 8vo. vol. of the writings of Savonarola, in the library of the Earl of Charlemont. No title specifying date and place of publication.

—— Contemplationes sopra diverse passione de Jesu infino alla croce (20 pages), Ib.

Trattato della Revelazione della Reformatione della Chiesa ; Ven. 8vo. 1536.

—— della Provocatione di Dio alla Renovazione della Chiesa ; Ven. 4to. 1517.

—— della Contemplazione ciro Jesu gia elevato in aria sulla croce ; Ven. 8vo.

—— Della Umilta ; Fir. 4to. 1495 ; Sc. in 1492.

—— Della Orazione mentale ; Fir. 4to 1492 ; Sc. in 1492.

—— Dell 'Amore de Jesu Christo ; Fir. 4to. 1492 ; Sc. in 1492.

—— Secondo dell Orazione ; Fir. 4to. 1495.

—— Sopra la vita vedovile ; Fir. 4to. 1495 ; Sc. in 1495.

—— Dell misterio della croce ; Fir. 4to. 1495. See note.

Tractatus De vitæ Spirituale Perfectione, ad septem illius gradus a S. Bonaventura distinctos ; Fir. 4to. 1497 ; Sc. in 1497.

Tradotto in Volgare da Fileppo Cinioni ; Ven. 1538.

Trattato Del Sacramento de Misterii della messa e regola utile ; Fir. 4to. 1495.

Tractatus graduum ascendendi ad perfectionem vitæ Spiritualis, 1497 scriptus ; Flor. 4to. 1497.

There is a wood-cut representing a ladder placed against a cross, with certain words between the steps, intended, I think, to illustrate this tract, but bound up with another in a volume of Savonarola's tracts in Trinity College, Dublin.

Lamentatio sponsi Christi, Adversus tepidos et pseudo predicatores sive Exhortatio ad Fideles : up precenter Dominum, Pro Renovatione Eccelsiæ, Anno domino 1497 ;* Flor. 4to. 1497 ; Sc. in 1497.

Discorso. Loqui Prohibeor et tacere non possum ; In Bib. Con. Bouterlin Fir. Sc. in 1497.

—— Del discreto e conveniente modo di far Orazione, ai suoi Frati ; Firenze, 1497, 4to ; Sc. in 1497.

—— Del adoperarsi in Carita secondo la Divina Disposizione, ai suoi Frati ; Firenze, 1497, 4to. ; Sc. in 1497.

* Meir, a German critic, has discovered in a private library in Florence of Count Bouterlin, a manuscript copy of Savonarola's treatise, "Loqui prohibeor et tacere non possum," not to be found in the collections of Quetif, or the biography of Burlamacchi.

* Meditatio in Psalmum Miserere mei Deus, &c.; Ven. 16mo. 1548. In Italiano, Expositione sopra il psalmo Misere mei Deus, &c. (scritta quando era in prigione nel mese de Maggio, 1498) tradotto de Latino in volgare ad istanza di certe devoti donne; Fir. 4to.

*—— in Psalmum XXX. *In te Domine Speravi, &c.* (scripta in carcere 1498); Ven. 16mo. 1518.

Orazione, che fece a di de XXIII. de Maggio 1498 (quando era in carcere ultima di del vita sua).

* Oratio in articulo mortis (20 lines), included in a vol. of sermons, 16mo. 1510.

* Operetta mollo utile sopra i dieci commandamenti di dio; Fir. 4to. 1495; Sc. in 1495.—Diricta alla madonna o vera Badessa de monasterio di murale in Firen. (58 pages.)

* Psalmus Sen Oratio devotissimo "Diligam te Domine," &c.; Ven. 16mo. 1517; Sc. in 1495.

* Discorso circa el regimento e governo degli stati e specialmente sopra il governo della citta di Firenza; Sc. in 1494; Londra 4to. 1765; Fir. 1497; Ed. opt. 8vo. Flor. 1847, par Audin de Rians.

* Conclusiones patris dominici Hieronymi per eum predicati: 1. Ecclesia Dei indiget renovatione. 2. Flagellabitur, Renovabitur. 3. Florentiam quo post flagellam renovabitur et prosperabitur. 4. Infideles Convertentur ad Christum ut patet anno Christo 1534, septem milia baptisati in Granata. 5. Hæc omnia erunt temporibus nostris. 6. Excommunicatio nuper facta contra vere cundum patrem Hieronimum nulla est. 7. Non observantes eam non peccant.—Finis.

The above follows the *Oratio in Articulo Mortis*, and is contained in the vol. of sermons, 16mo. 1510.—No printer's name, &c.

Meditationes Diversæ in aliquot S. Scripturæ loca; MS. in Bib.; Moleni in Flor.

Expositione sopra l'Ave Maria; Fir. 4to.; Ven. 8vo. 1538.

* Meditatio in Psalmum Qui regis Israel; Ven. 16mo. 1518.

Expositio Decalogi *Italice*; Flor. 4to. 1495.

—— Habacuch prophetæ, MS. in Biblioth. Nanian. MS. Lat. Cod. Cl. No. 28.

—— super X Psalmus ex Psalmis graduum, MS.

—— brevis in librum Esther, &c.; Ven. 1536.

De perfectione status religiosi; *Italice*. Flor. 4to. 1495; vide Cave.

Precatio Dominica; Lug. Bat. 16mo. 1633.

—— ex Psalmis Davidis Collecta pro remissione peccatorum, &c.; Lubeng, 12mo. 1621.

Regula X. Orandi tribulationis tempore; *Italice*, Ven. 8vo. 1533; vide Cave Hist. Lit.

—— Bene Vivendi ad suos discipulos *Italice*, Ibidem.

Regulæ vivendi Christiane, in carcere scriptæ 1498, Italicæ conscriptæ; Regole del ben vivere Christiano; Fir. 4to. 1498.

—— VII. Religiosis omnibus observandæ; Ven. 16mo. 1537; *Italice*, Ib.

* Regulæ Quædam Fructuosissimæ ad omnes religiosos attinentes vel Institutiones Monastice Mortalibus ad bene beataque vivendum. Vel de Disciplina et Perfectione Monasticæ Conversationis; Brixia, 16mo. 1502.

Class II.—Epistles and Letters.

Epistola. Fratribus San Marci Flor. quando predicabat in Bononia anno 1492. Vide Vit. Sav. par Mirand.

—— All Madonna Magdalena Contessa della Mirandola, le quale voleva entrare nel Monasterio de Santa Clara. Vide Vit. Sav. par Miraud, tom. ii.

—— In Apologeticum Fratrum Congregationis S. Marci ejusdem ordinis. Vide Vit. Sav. par Mirand. tom. ii. In lib. Lord Charlemont, 20 pages.

—— Ad Alexandrium VI. Die xx. Maii, 1497. In Lib. Lord. Char.

—— Ad Alexandrium VI. 13 Martis, 1498. Vide ib.

—— Ejusdem ad idem de ignis periculo cum documentis et notis, 42 page. Vide ib.

Lettera. Al nobile et egregio viro Nicolao Savonarola patre optimo: al padre Suo Nicolo a de 25 d'Aprile, 1745. Ven. 8vo. 1547. In Miscellanea Baluzii, Vita de Sav.

—— Al suoi diletti figluoli in Christo Yesu uniti nel Convento de San Marco di Fir. Ven. 4to. 1547. In Vit. Sav. par. Mirand.

Epistola. Ad un Donna Bolognese sopra la Communione. Fir. 4to. 1491.

Epistoletta. Ad uno duo familiare Inc. Magnifice vir. Parlando de suoi invitazione a penitenza. In Bib. Conte. Bouterlin Fir. In MS.

Epistola. Ad Alexandrum Papam Sextam, die 21 Junii, 1495. inedita.

—— Ad Regem Christianissimum Francorum data in S. Marco à di 26 Maggio, 1490, Citata in Vit. Sav. par Burlamacchi, inedita. Vide De Rians.

—— Al Convento de Frati Predicatori a Fiesulè della Perfezzione edella Tentazione, Fir. 4to. 1495.

—— Ad Amicum deficientem, cum notis de Censuris, 104 pag. Vide de Vit. Sav. par Mirand.

—— Ad Illustrissima Madonna G. Caraffa Moglia del Conte J. Pico Mirandola.

—— Ludovico Pillori.

—— Ai suoi delette figlinoli in Christo uniti nel Convento di San Marco.

—— El suoi frata del discreto e conveniente modo di far'-orazione.

—— El frateili nel monasterio di S. Vincentio in Firenze, ea tutti le altre suore e persone devote. Data in Fir. 17 Oct. 1497 (16 pages).

—— Ad laudem de Jesu Christo e della sue amanti tradocta del Philippo Leoni. In vol. of works of Sav. in library of Lord Charlemont.

Epistola. Fatta à la Congregazione dei Frati di San Marco dal modo di resistere alle tentazione è de pervenire alla per fezzione. Fir. 1497, 4to.

—— El Madalena Contessa della Mirandola della perfezzione dell stato Religioso, Fir. 4to. 1445.

—— Delle Sorella del terzo ordine di San Domenico, della Lezzione spirituale. Fir. 4to. 1497.

—— Alle frati suoi, della peste spirituale. Fir. 4to. 1497.

—— Al Pad. Fra Pietro di Beccuto; Del nan temere ne fuggire la Morte. Fir. 4to. 1497.

—— A tuttigli eletti di Dio e fedeli Christiani. Fir. 1497. 4to. In Vit. Sav. par Mirand.

—— A certe persone devote persequitate per la verita da lui predicata. Fir. 4to. 1497. (In Vit. Sav. par Mirand.)

—— A tutti li Christiani è diletti di Dio. Fir. 4to. 1497. (In Vit. Sav. par Mirand.)

—— Ad fratrem quendam contra sententiam Excommunicationis Contra se nuper injuste latam. (In Vit. Sav. par Mirand.) Fir. 4to. 1497.

—— Ad uno amico vaccilante per le persecuzione. Fir. 4to. 1497. (In Vit. Sav. par Mirand.)

—— Ad Alexandrum Sextum die 20 Maii, 1497.

—— (Lettera) A Madonna Caterina di Sforle. Sc. in 1497. (In append. Vit. Sav. par Burlamacchi ap. Miscellanea Baluzii.)

—— (Copia d' una lettera). Al Duca di Ferrara Sc. in Agosto, 1497. (In app. Vit. Sav. Ibid.)

—— Alla Signora Maria Angela Sforza Duchessa di Ferrara Sc. in 1497. (In app. Vit. Sav. Ibid.)

—— Al Sig. Giov. Fran. Pic. della Mirandola al di 8 di May, 1497. (In app. Vit. Sav. Ibid.)

—— Al Medesimo dapoi chi fu ingiustamente scommunicato. Sc. in 1497.

—— A due Giovanni Ferrarese. Sc. in 1497.

—— A. M. Bertrando Ferrarese Pronotario Apostolico. Sc. in 1497. (In app. Vit. Sav. par Burlamacchi.)

Lettera Al Serenissimo Imperatore Sc. in 1497. (In app. Vit. Sav. par Burlamacchi app. Miscellanea Baluzii.)

—— Al Re è Regina de Espana Sc. in 1497. (Ibid.)

Epistola Ad Alexandrum Papam Sextum die 8 Martii, 1498.

—— Lettere Inedite di Fra Ger. Savonarola, published by the Padre Vincenzo Marchese, in the Archivio Storico Italiano. Appendix No. 25, issue 36th, Flor. 1850. 8vo. containing the following valuable letters :—

Lettera 1 A Ellena Buonacorsi (sua Madre) written from Pavia, fest. of St. Paul's Conv. 1491.

—— 2 A Fra Domenico da Pescia, written from Flor. 10. March, 1491.

—— 3 *Ad Alberto Savonarola (suo fratello)*, date 28th Oct. 1495.

Lettera 4 *Alla Madre.* Date 5th Nov. 1495.
—— 5 A Beatrice Savonarola sua sorella. 3rd Nov. 1496.
—— 6 *Al Conte Galeotto Pico della Mirandola*, no date.
—— 7 *Allo Stesso.* Date 26th March 1496.
—— 8 *A Madonna Caraffa e Madonna la sorella del Conte G. Francesco della Mirandola.* Date 3rd April 1497.
—— 9 *A Maestro Alberto (suo fratello).* Date 24th June 1497.
—— 10 A Maestro Ludovico Pittorio. Date 13th Aug. 1497.
—— 11 *A Maestro Alberto (suo fratello).* Date Vigil of Assumption, 1497.
—— 12 *Alli frati de San Domenico de Bologna.* No date, but written after the 25th Dec. 1497.
—— 13 A sorella Katarina suora del Monasterio de Pistoia. Date 24th Jany. 1495.
—— 14 Alla Stesso. 26th July 1497.

These last two letters are of no interest or importance.

CLASS III.—SERMONS AND EXHORTATIONS.

Sermone mero, o lectione à molti sacerdoti religiosi et Secculari in San Marco, 25th Feb. 1409.

Sermones XIX nusquam ante hac impressi. Rev. P. Fra Hieronymi Savonarola in primum D. Joannis epistolam et in alia Sacre Scriptore verba ignitî eloquii. 12mo. Ven. 1536. (Preached in Florence about 1490, 1491.)

This volume contains the following twenty sermons :— 1. De Pace Superna civitatis. 2. De admiratione omnium sanctorum. 3. De celsitudine verbi Dei per sensum tactus. 4. De Verbo vitæ seu de vita eterna. 5. De vera vita manifestata. 6. De eternitate vitæ beatæ. 7. De charitate puri cordis. 8. De auditu missæ. 9. De compesitione corporis et mentis in missa. 10. De mysteriis in missa. 11. De Missa et mysteriis ejus. 12. De Excellentia verbi incarnati. 13. De loco ubi se collocant verbum natum. 14. De gaudiis Beati Virginis Mariæ in partu. 15. De veneratione, suavitate ac virtute sacri nominis Jesu. 16. De fervore magorum atque perfidia Judæorum. 17. De virtute et potentia sacri nominis Jesu. 18. De Virtute et Potentia sacri nominis Jesu, de conditionibus amoris Jesu.

*Prediche XXV sopra il Salmo, Quam bonus Israel Deus, &c., predicate in Firenze, in S. Maria del Fiore in uno Advento del 1493, del medesimo poi in Latina lingua raccolte, e da *Fra Girol. Gianotti* da Pistoja in lingua volgare tradotte. Ven. 1528. Preached at Florence during Advent, in the church of S. Maria del Fiore, 1493.

Both of the above-mentioned collections, making forty-four sermons, are published in a recent edition entitled ; "Sermoni e prediche di Fra Girolamo Savonarola de' predicatori, 8vo. Firenza 1846. Volume Unico. This volume was announced as the first of an intended series of the

Prediche of Fra Girolamo, but the design fell to the ground with the new reign of Liberalism in Italy.

In 1847 the same collection—if not the same volume—appeared with the same title, but the date and place of publication changed, Prato being substituted for Firenza.

The sermons in which the 1st Epistle of St. John is expounded, the editor states, in the preface, are from the Italian edition of Venice, of 1547, collated with the Latin edition of 1536, and with the autograph manuscript, in the possession of Lord Holland.

I have in my possession a volume in 12mo., printed in Vienna, containing these sermons, in Primam D. Joannis Epistolam, in the Latin tongue, and on the title page it is stated they were never before printed. "*Nusquam ante hac impressi.*"

In four of those sermons on St. John's Epistle, we find the sacrifice of the mass described in a manner the most sublime, and the mystery of redemption expounded and made intelligible to all intellects, and its symbols in the different ceremonials explained with wonderful perspicuity.

In three others, we find the following subjects treated in a manner the most admirable:—"Of the veneration of the sacred name of Jesus, and the sweetness and the virtue of it."

"Of the virtue and power of the sacred name of Jesus, how Jesus is lost, how He should be believed in, and how He is to be found."

"Of the conditions of the love of Jesus Chrst."

The last-mentioned sermons on the Psalm, "*Quam Bonus Israel Deus,*" were preached in Latin, and were translated into Italian, it is said in the preface, by Fra Girolamo Giannatto da Pistora, from the original Prediche, published in Venice in 1528.

Sermones XLVI. Quadragesimales super Arcam Noë; Venet. 1536. 8vo. pred. in 1494.

*23 Prediche XXIII. del Rev. P. F. Hieronymo Savonarola del ordine de Predicatori Sopra alcuni Salmi et sopra Aggeo Profeta, fatte in Firenze et in S. Maria dal Fiore del Mese di Novembre et Decembre, 1494. Raccolte dalla sua viva voce, Da frate Stefano da Co, di Ponte suo discipulo. Ven. 1544. 12mo. Pred. in 1494.

[This volume containing the twenty-three sermons, preached on the occasion of the entry of the French army, under Charles the Eighth, into Italy, in the author's possession, has the following discourses:]

1. Penitentiam agite. 2. Il lumen naturale non e sufficiente al Christiano. 3. Le bellezza del anima, i corpi resuscitati lucidi e chiari. 4. La divina misericordia, nell opera misma de su justitia. 5. Quatro pani per cibo de Christiano: Simplicita, de la sacra scrittura, e Sacramento penitentia et oracion. 6. De l'arca quelli chi son dentro e che vi fuore. 7. Del arca—e sopra il Salmo cxiv. 8. Della rinovatione della chiesa e sopra il salmo "Confitemini." 9. Exposicion del Salmo —Beatus vir, &c. 10. Chi ha del superfluo, siate obligate dare a poveri. 11. Il cattivo cattadino figura da Balthassar Re di Babilonio. 12. Il cielo solo incorruptibile. Il fine del Uomo. 13. Annuntia la

renovatione del la chiesa; Ogni regno quanto piu spirituale tanto mas forte. 14. Sopra l'Apocalisse e sopra Aggeo. 15. Del governo, forma di stato, Pace, afflittione di Firenza dal 1434. 16. Che il huomo appassionate non vede il vero. 17. Le cose corporale sujetti a cose spirituale. 18. La felicita humana consiste nella contemplatione di Dio. 19. Esposition de Salmo cxlvi. Laudate dominum. 20. Idem Seguita. La proprieta di Dio e di unire, e del diavalo de disunire. 21. L' unione, il fondamento del reforma di una cella e la volonta di Dio. 22. Dio solo infinito. Il huomo il termine suo. La chiesa in peggiore stato che mai. 23. Delle hierarchie. Il governo d'un solo ottimo quando il governatore e bono ma non convenirsi in Italia.

Prediche XXX. sopra diversi Salmi e molte altre notabilissime materie; Firenze, 1496, 4to. Pred. in 1495.

—— XLVII. sopra Job, fatte in Firenze, l'anno 1494 [stilo Romane 1495], nuovamente venute in luce. Con una lettera al suo Padre quando entrò nella religione; Venez. 1545, 8vo. Pred. in 1495.

Predica in Junio 1495. A Deo Deus Mundum quod dedit.

Prediche XLVII. sopra Amos Profeta e sopra Zaccharea Profeta, &c. Raccolte della viva voce da Lorenzo Violi; Fir. 1497. Pred. in 1496.

Predica. Latæbor Israel.

—— Del arte di bene morir. Several wood-cuts, one representing three dead bodies, one of a pope with the tiara, another of a temporal sovereign with his crown, and death flying over the world. (In a volume of Savonarola's works, in the library of Lord Charlemont.)

*Sermoni due fatti ai suoi Frati nella vigilia di natale sopra la natività del nostro Signor Gesu Christo; Venez. 1538, 8vo.

There is a Latin version of this sermon "in vigilia nativitatis," in a volume of Savonarola's Sermons in my possession, printed in 1510, in 16mo. (no name or place). This sermon was translated into Latin by Bartholomey Gallus (Mutilianesis), and is addressed to two English professors of theology, Doctor John Yeng and Master Stephen. The dedication of this translation to them is dated from London, 8th October, 1509. The valediction at the end is very complimentary to these "vires venerabilis," of an unnamed university:

"Valete totius Angliæ eternus decus."

Prediche XXIX. sopra Ruth e Michea, fatte l' anno 1496, ne' giorni delle feste, finito che ebbe la Quaresima; Firenze, 1497, 4to; Venez. 1514, 4to.

Predica fatta la mattina dell' Ascensione 1497. Raccolta par maestro *Hieron Cinozzi*, publicata alla requisizione del Rev. P. Frate Hieronymo. Venez. 1541, 8vo.

Prediche VIII. supra Lament. Jeremiæ.

—— Alguni sopra il Cantica ed altri luoghi della Sacra Scrittura.

Sermone fatto a molti sacerdoti, religiosi e secolari, à San Marco à di 15 de Feb. 1498.

Sermone (Esortazione) fatto al popolo a dì 7 d'Aprile, 1498, nel quale si tratte de fare l'esperimento del fuoco in piazza de Signori; Firenza, 4to., 1498; Ven. 1540, 8vo.

Prediche XXII. sopra l'Esodo e sopra alquanti Salmi, fatte in S. Maria del Fiore cominciando la domenica della Settuagesima il dì xi di Febrajo, 1498; Raccolte per Messer *Lorenzo Violi*; Firenze, 1498, 4to.

CLASS IV.—SPIRITUAL SONGS AND POEMS.—LAUDE E CANZONE.

Canzona, De Ruina Mundi, Sc. in 1472.
—— De Ruina Ecclesiæ, Sc. circa, 1475.
—— Ad Divam Katarinam Bononiensem.
—— Sopra la Felicità di Fiorenza, cantata del 1496.
—— A Fiorentini, Sc. circa 1495.
Canzonetta Della Consolazione del Crocifisso.
Ottave scritte da Savonarola nel Proprio Breviario, l'anno 1471.
Lauda, composta l'anno 1474.
—— al Crocifisso da Cantarsi con Musica a tre voci.
—— per Infiammare Il Core al Divino Amore.
—— Jesu all' Anima.
—— a S. Maria Maddalena Sc. dal Savonarola nel Proprio Breviario.
—— de S. Maria Maddalena pro Itirantibus.
Oratio Devotissima ad Virginem Mariam.
Sonetto, Salve Regina.

NOTES.

NOTE 1. Savonarola's work "Compendium Totius Philosophiæ tam Naturalis quam Moralis," lib. xx. Ven. 1542, as described by Mirandola, is cited by Cave, under the title of "Margarita Philosophica seu Rationalis Philosophiæ Principia ab O. Finæo aucta, &c." Basle, 4to. 1535.

Echard, in his great work "Scriptores Predic." vol. i. p. 890, in the notice of Savonarola's writings, cites the treatise, "*Compendium totius Philosophiæ tam Naturalis quam Moralis*," in 5 books, printed in Venice, by Juntas, in 8vo. 1542; afterwards in Francfort, in 8vo. and in Wittemberg, 1596, in 8vo.

Cave has fallen into a gross error, and has probably confounded Savonarola's Treatise with a very singular work of another author, which contains the earliest notice of distinct faculties of the mind being seated in particular organs in the brain, with a rude woodcut representing these several organs regularly mapped out in a phrenological manner, that work has been ascribed to a Carthusian monk of the name of Reisch. This matter deserves the investigation of the learned. Strange to say,

the "Margarita Philosophica, without an author's name, &c." published at Basle, 4to. 1535, has been confounded with a work of John Scotus Erigena, "De Divisione Naturæ," lib. v. edited by Gale, and published at Oxford, 4to. 1681.

The work ascribed to Reisch, is entitled "Margarita Philosophica Totius Philosophiæ Rationalis et Moralis Principia Duodecim libris, Dialogis Complectens. Friburgi Johannis Schottus, 4to. 1503."

In the last line we have evidently the cause of the confusion which has led to the work being ascribed to Erigena. John Schottus, the printer, is mistaken for John Scotus, the schoolman denominated Erigena.

The name of Reisch is not mentioned at all in this edition, either on the title-page or in the body of the work.

There is a later edition of this work than that printed in Basle, 1535 or 1536, which has been in my possession. No author's name appears in the title-page, but Brunet in his *Manuel du Libraire* (Ed. 1820) vol. iii. page 209, ascribes the work to Gregorius Reisch, Prior de Friburg.

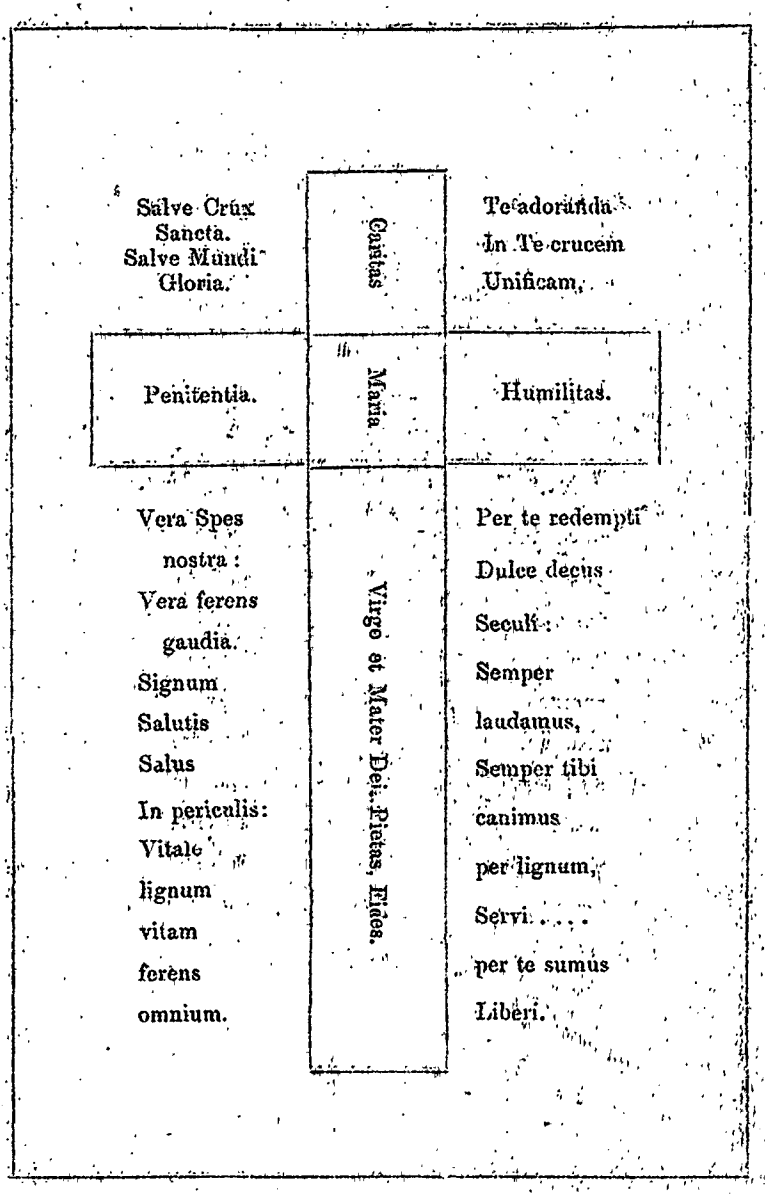
An edition in the library, Trinity College, Dublin, bears the name of Reisch* on the title as its author, it is entitled: "Margarita Philosophica hoc est Habituum Lex Disciplinarum omnium Quotquot Philosophiæ Syncerioris amitu continentur perfectissimæ (in lib. xii.) A F. Gregorio Reisch, Dialogis suis primum edita dein ab Orontio Finæo Delphinate Regio Parisiensi Mathematico Necessariis aliquot Auctoriis locupleta, 4to. Basil, (no date). Preface of Ed. dated 1503.

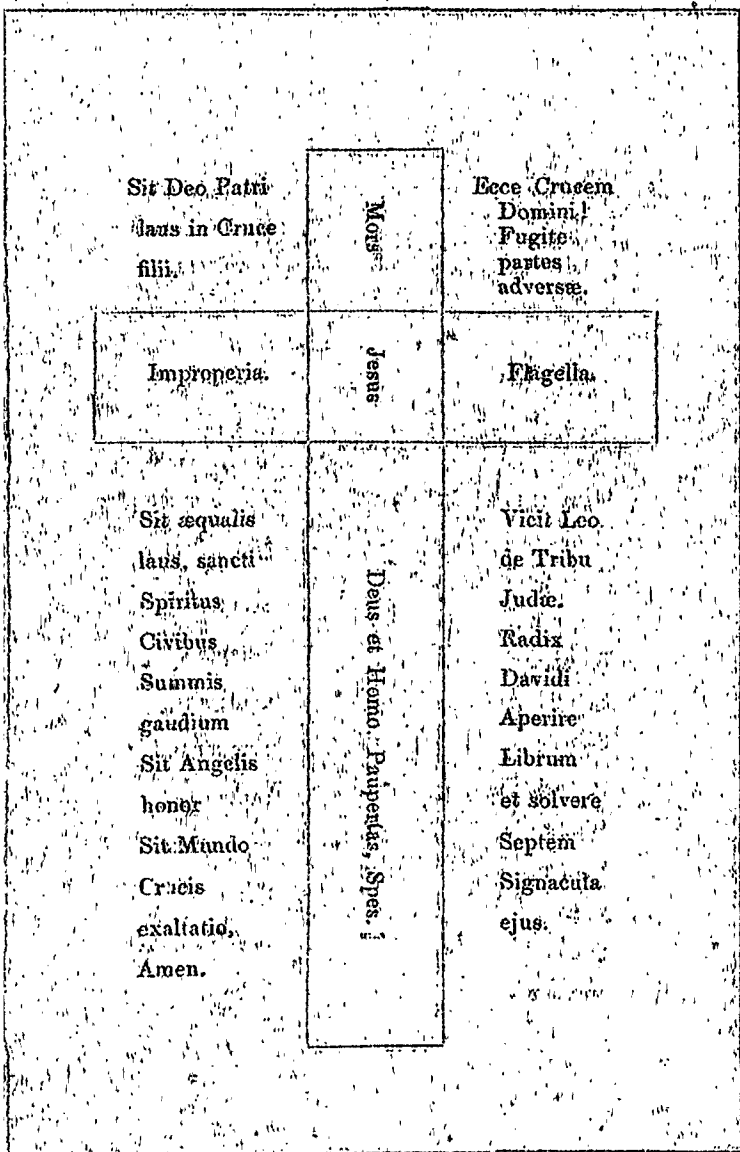
This is the work, and the edition of it, which in Cave's "Scriptores Ecclesiasticæ" is cited as Savonarola's Treatise.

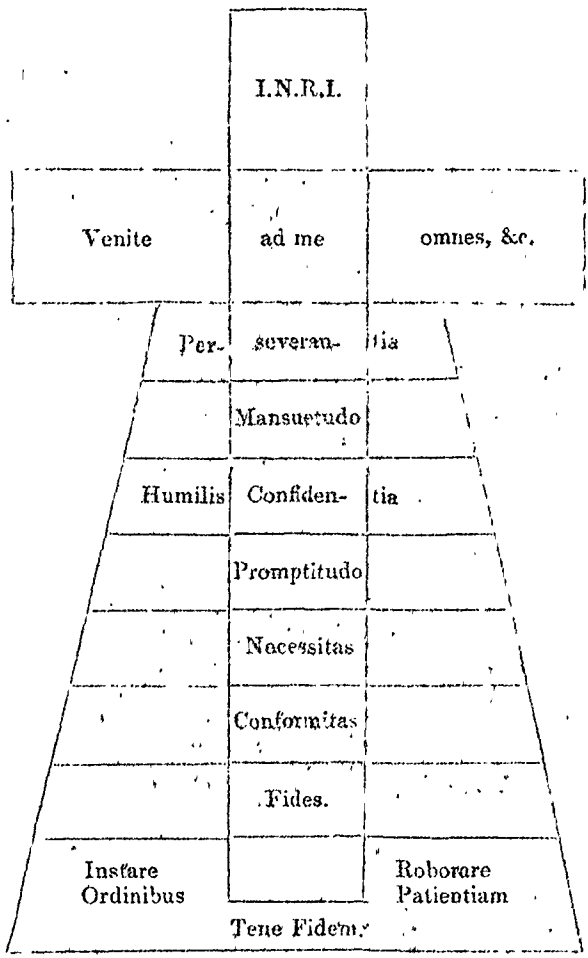
Savonarola's "Compendium Philosophiæ" is extremely rare; I have never seen a copy of it. It remains for those who may have access to it, to determine how far Resch may have availed himself of it either wholly or in part.

Note 2. In the very rare tract of Savonarola, entitled "Declaratione del Misterio della croce qui descripta," which exists in Trinity College, Dublin, there are two woodcuts, and a representation of a cross, five and a half inches long, and three and a half inches broad, with words in the several spaces, which served, I imagine, as a formula of prayer for some devotion in honour of the cross. There is also another figure of a cross with a ladder set up against it, prefixed to another tract in the same volume, addressed to the Jurist de Calvis, of Bologna.

* Reisch was confessor to the emperor Maximilian who died in 1519.


Salve Crux Sancta. Salve Mundi Gloria.
Caritas
Te adoranda In Te crucem Unificam.
Penitentia.
Maria
Humilitas.
Vera Spes nostra: Vera ferens gaudia. Signum Salutis Salus In periculis: Vitale lignum vitam ferens omnium.
Virgo et Mater Dei. Pietas, Fides.
Per te redempti Dulce decus Seculi: Semper laudamus, Semper tibi canimus per lignum, Servi . . . . per te sumus Liberi.


Sit Deo Patri laus in Cruce filii.
Mors
Ecce Crucem Domini! Fugite partes adversæ.
Improperia.
Jesus
Flagella.
Sit æqualis laus, sancti Spiritus Civibus Summis gaudium Sit Angelis honor Sit Mundo Crucis exaltatio, Amen.
Deus et Homo Pauperias, Spes.
Vicit Leo de Tribu Judæ. Radix Davidi Aperire Librum et solvere Septem Signacula ejus.


I.N.R.I.
Venite
ad me
omnes, &c.
Per-
severan-
tia
Mansuetudo
Humilis
Confiden-
tia
Promptitudo
Necessitas
Conformitas
Fides.
Instare
Ordinibus
Roborare
Patientiam
Tene Fidem.

END OF VOL. I.

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